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Rajiv Gandhi A Question of Credibility

Kuldip Nayar

I was present in the press gallery the day a CPI(M) member, Ajoy Biswas, took away the statement which the Defence Minister, K.C. Pant, was trying to read out despite the Opposition's effort to block him. Most Opposition members were either sitting or standing in the well, the place just below the Speaker's chair. Congress(I) members also rushed towards the well after the CPI(M) member's action and events could have taken an ugly turn if the Deputy Speaker—the Speaker preferred to be absent—had not adjourned the house.

None supporting a parliamentary system of government will take the happening lightly. Things had often been had before this but never to this extent. The only redeeming feature is that the CPI(M) member has tendered an apology. The Opposition parties certainly used wrong tactics. But the Congress(I) must share part of the blame for it used its brute majority to check the Opposition.

The issue, however, is not how cleverly the Congress(I) manages Parliament or the Opposition. Nor the Opposition's failure to muster enough attention. The issue is whether Rajiv Gandhi is involved in the Bofors gun deal directly or indirectly. It was, to say the least, strange that he should have cancelled the visit of the Bofors delegation which was coming to India in connection with the disclosure of names of persons pocketing a commission of Rs.50 crore. The fact that his best friend, Arun Singh, left the government

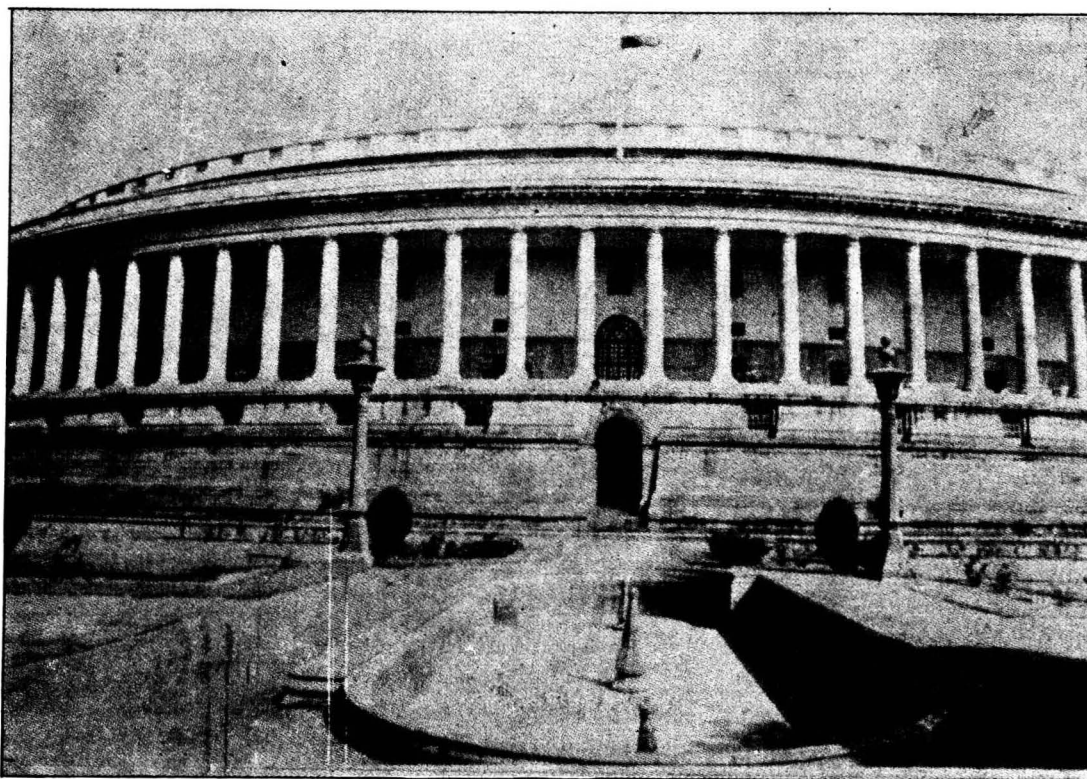
at this juncture confirms that even he could not defend the prime minister.

Management of Parliament

How does the management of Parliament help cover up this? It is a pity that the day when the Opposition brought up a privilege motion which the Speaker in his own "wisdom" rejected and allowed the government to speak on the Bofors deal, Rajiv Gandhi stayed away from the Lok Sabha. He should have been there to face the house. Either he is guilty, in which case none can save him, or he is not and in that case none can implicate him. By trying to manage the parliament—H.K.L. Bhagat, the Parliamentary Affairs minister, who is behind this will one day land him in a deeper mess—Rajiv Gandhi cannot clear his name,—and that is the most important problem he faces.

The allegation going the rounds is that Rajiv Gandhi or some of those close to him are involved in the defence deals. He has to prove to the public that he is clean. I personally think that on the very first day he should have been present in the house to be able to say that he was ready to face any inquiry to clear his name. Instead, the Congress party came up with a proposal of a parliamentary committee in which out of 15 members, 11 will be from the Congress(I). He should have given the Opposition the majority in the committee and also the chairmanship—even 50 per cent membership might be acceptable to the Opposition.

How does he expect the findings of a Congress(I) majority committee to be acceptable to the Opposition or, for that matter, to the country? Even if the Congress(I) majority committee were to come to the conclusion on the merit of the case that Rajiv Gandhi is not involved, none in the country will believe it. In fact, it is in his own interest to entrust the task to a body in which the country will have faith. The Congress



Selective Killings Selective Protests

(from our Correspondent)

After the unfortunate killings in Kalkaji, New Delhi on 30th July 1987, there was a rumour in the town that a bandh would be declared on the following day. That did not happen. Instead, the BJP decided to demonstrate outside the Parliament House. That was not allowed and there was almost unavoidably, clash between the police and the demonstrators.

The question being asked everywhere is How is it that call for bandh was not given on July 31. It is reported that there were heated and prolonged arguments and counter arguments within the ranks of the BJP on this subject. A considerable section of opinion was in favour of having a Bandh on July 31. This is what had happened on all such

occasions in the past. Not only that the BJP had got considerable political mileage from all such Bandhs. Opinion in favour of a Bandh was therefore overwhelming.

Till somebody pointed out that only 10 days earlier, there had been killings near Meerut and no body had protested and nobody had given a call for a Bandh in Delhi. The implication was clear. When a member of your community dies, you protest. If a member of your community kills you maintain a discreet silence. Could there be any other interpretation of the studied silence of the BJP after the Meerut killings? It is not always that one is caught in such a compromising position. When there were killings in Punjab, there were counter killings and

retaliatory violence. If the same things happened in Meerut or somewhere else, there was no reaction whatsoever. It was this inconsistency of approach which seems to have tilted the balance against the Bandh in Delhi on July 31. Selective killings and selective protest have become the order of the day in Indian politics for the last several years. But the positions adopted by various political parties has been so self contradictory that one of these day it was bound to come into the open as it did come on this occasion.

Killings are bad, always and everywhere. They were bad before June 84, in June 84, in November '84 and on all occasions since then. What is more, killings are bad who ever carries them out.

THE FORUM GAZETTE

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Thoughts on Punjab

G.S. Sandhu

Explosions like violence on the highways shakes the government out of indifference towards the current problems of the people. All high and mighty ones make perfunctory statements and then lapse into their old grooves. Problems grow, wounds fester, heritage bequeathed by centuries of goodwill is allowed to waste away. The powers that be, however, deem drift to be the best policy. The silver line on this dark cloud is provided by the concerned citizens and public men.

Punjab is the worst victim of this policy of drift. The government chooses to defer all political initiative till terror is wiped out. The concerned citizens on the other hand cry out for political approach to the Punjab problem. Vinod Mehta,

"In no country in the world has terrorism been wiped out by force. The most telling example of this is Northern Ireland, where British security forces, vastly more experienced, sophisticated and technologically advanced than ours, have failed to curb the IRA. Even the Israelis, perhaps the most efficient in the art of counter-terrorism, have no answer against the surprise attack. True. In Germany and Italy the Badar-Meinhoff group and the Red Brigade are no longer active, but that is not the result of police success. Terrorism in these countries died because the social and political conditions which gave it birth in the late 60s and 70s changed drastically. In fact radical politics in Europe disappeared largely because

efficient, however motivated, however well-equipped, however sound the intelligence, the Punjab police aided by para military forces can only chase terrorists from one highway to the next. Mr. Ribeiro is up against youths on a divine mission. We have seen pictures of 13 years olds in the Iran-Iraq war go happily to certain death with a prayer on their lips and pictures of Khomeini around their neck. Mr. Ribeiro's men cannot match this kind of motivation.

The other fact to remember is that you don't need a vast terrorist network to spread terror and mayhem—three hundred will do the job quite nicely. In the process of going after this small number, the police, however scrupulous, must harass, arrest, even kill some



outside Parliament House against repression and for the restoration of Democracy in Punjab

Rajni Kothari, Salil Tripathi, Rustamji and Amnesty International all in their respective ways have urged initiative to reduce the grimness of the situation in Punjab. We bring you selected excerpts from these highly concerned citizens and associations.

In the Sunday Observer, July 12, 1987, Vinod Mehta writes, "Sad, but Ribeiro has to go". He points out

the practitioners of the art either became totally cynical or entered mainstream public life.

Mr. Ribeiro errs grievously. He will never win the war against terrorism. Under President's rule, with no political interference, with Ribeiro as the "boss", the level of violence has mounted to an unprecedented level. Does the government think that by sending in more CRPF or even the army that the miracle can be achieved? It cannot. However

innocents. Thus the Khalistan Commando Force and the Bhindranwale Tigers find new recruits every day.

And now we come to the supreme danger. As the level of activity against the terrorists increases, as it is now under President's rule, the terrorists respond by increasing the level of violence from their side. In the last week, the terrorists have struck thrice—something they

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Sound and Fury

There will be no swaraj in this country until people wear Italian shoes, until people send their children abroad to study, until people are allowed to wind up their business in India and settle down in Switzerland because they find the Indian bureaucracy too worrisome—

Mr. Arif Mohammed Khan in Statesman

At least Rs. 50 crore worth of kickbacks in the Bofors deal have been received by the prime minister and his friends. I am willing to be prosecuted for libel. I want a chance to cross-examine those whom I believe to be guilty.

—Ram Jethmalani after returning from Sweden, India Today

Instead of isolating the terrorists, the present Government itself stands isolated from the people.

—S.S. Barnala at a news conference

Even Nathuram Godse was not immediately hanged. Are Congressmen now to receive their political death sentences through the press?

—V.P. Singh in a letter to the Congress president on the expulsion of three leaders from the party.

Instead of punishing thieves and communalists, Rajiv Gandhi has chosen to attack us—

V.C. Shukla, The Telegraph

Deel chhota matkaro, drid raho kyon ki tumlog sahi raste par ho. (don't be disheartened, be firm as you are on the right path).

—Fatherly advice by Shri Kamalpathi Tripathi to Mr. Arif Mohd. Khan. What do they (The Congress I) have with them—only three or four states.

—Devi Lal, Haryana Chief Minister, Sunday

We need such persons (like V.P. Singh) for cleansing public life.... Basically he (Rajiv Gandhi) is a good man.

—Amrita Pritam, Punjabi Novelist and Rajya Sabha member.

I do not have any in-laws abroad and will settle in the country itself—

Mr. Zail Singh The Statesman

Rajiv Gandhi has been imprisoned in a dark room. He is completely in the dark—

Mr. Subhas Ghising, The Statesman

The Naxalite movement was launched by brilliant young men preaching a hard economic doctrine. There was no emotional involvement. Here the movement launched by the terrorists is based on emotion—

Mr. Siddhartha Shankar Ray, on Punjab terrorism. The Statesman

The roots of the gigantic tree of terrorism will have to be exposed—

Mr. Darshan Singh, acting Akal Takhat Chief.

The battle in Haryana has been won. Now it is the turn of Delhi—

Devi Lal, The Telegraph

It is no use cleaning the Ganga at Benaras of Allahabad while Gangotri itself is polluted—

V.P. Singh, The Telegraph.

Rajshakti is not enough to control communal outbreaks. The Government needs janashakti—

Mr. V.P. Singh. The Statesman

One-party systems are bad enough. One-family one-party systems are a quarantee of disaster—unless, as in India today they are the last chance of salvation for a young politician in deep trouble—

The Economist.

If Mr. Gandhi is destabilizing his own Government with his mistakes, who can help?

—Mr. C. Rajeshwara Rao. Statesman

The Editor is being reduced to a scribe who is expected to write what he is told—

Prem Shankar Jha, former editor of The Hindustan Times, quoted in The Times of India.

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NEWSHOUND

YOU THINK THESE LARGE RELIGIOUS PROCESSIONS MEAN MORE AND MORE PEOPLE ARE TURNING TO GOD?



I GUESS SO...



YA! OUR GOD CAN ORGANISE A BIGGER RALLY THAN YOUR GOD!!

By Rap

40 Years of India's Independence

V.K.R.V. Rao

On the eve of 40th anniversary of India's Independence, Prof. V.K.R.V. Rao, an eminent economist, educationist and ex-union minister takes stock of the performance of the Indian polity in the four decades of Independence in his presidential address on the occasion of XII Indian Social Science Congress at Mysore. Given here is a part of that address.

Altogether, Indian society today presents a picture which is far from being in line with the aspirations formed during our struggle for freedom and later embodied in the Constitution itself. Instead of national integration, we now have growth of divisive forces and separtist elements and groups. The search for an Indian National Identity, while it has been accomplished among many of the elite, has still to find achievement among the minorities and weaker sections of Indian society. Communalism, regionalism and casteism are becoming conspicuously visible forces that are weakening, if not actually negating, any attempt to build solidarity into Indian society. Centre-State relations are under great strain, with states deploring their financial dependence and resenting what they see as the growing Central encroachment on their powers and functions. Corruption and tax evasion have increased, black money is proliferating and an extra-legal economy has come into existence. There has been an immense erosion in basic values. Unemployment and poverty are more conspicuous and indeed much more keenly felt than in the past. Gender discrimination, part of the tradition in the past, has now come under severe attack by growing feminist movements.

From a brief review of the present position, it seems clear that we have not achieved much progress in the implementation of the objectives which we set for ourselves during our fight for independence, and which were later made part of the Constitution. In fact, in many ways, we seem to have slid backwards with communalism, casteism, regionalism and linguism threatening the very unity of the country. What has gone wrong with our programmes? Should we think in terms of a new strategy for bringing about our objectives; or should we only have to bring more effectiveness and completeness in the strategy we have followed so far?

Contradictions

The trouble was that we took too many things for granted. We assumed that India had become a nation because we were able to get rid of British rule over the country. We should have remembered the warning that Dr. Ambedkar gave while moving the final reading of the Constitution Bill which I quote: "Sooner we realise that we are not yet a nation in the social and psychological sense of the word, the better for us, for then only we shall realise the necessity of becoming a nation and seriously think of ways and means of realising that goal". We should also have remembered what he said further:

"On 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality, and in social

must begin by acknowledging the fact that there is complete absence of two things in Indian society: one is equality, the second thing we are wanting is the recognition of the principles of fraternity".

Untouchability

We believed that we have abolished untouchability from Hindu society because we had abolished untouchability by the Constitution. We did not take any special steps to see that the customs and practices arising from the institution of untouchability were actually done away with both in urban and rural life, especially the latter, where the forces of modernisation are yet to make headway. In the first instance, it should have meant a very big national education campaign on the evil of untouchability, its inconsistency with the freedom

process of economic development rather than trickling down from the top to the bottom. When we realised it, we went in for special anti-poverty programmes which were not integrally linked with the programmes for economic growth and development that was sought by our planning efforts. We made no attempts to see that in the very process of economic development there was in-built provision for tackling the problem of poverty and unemployment, especially in rural areas, nor did we undertake the kind of fundamental structural changes in land relations which were necessary for the purpose.

The result is that in spite of 40 years of independence, the country still has a very large number of poor and a very large volume of unemployment and underemployment. It is difficult



Signing the Constitution of India; a document of Welfare state.

and economic life, we will have inequality. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment, or else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of our political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up. We must make our political democracy a social democracy as well. Social democracy means we should recognise liberty, equality and fraternity as principles of life. These principles form a union of trinity in the sense that to divorce one from the other is to defeat the very purpose of democracy. Liberty cannot be divorced from fraternity. We

that we have now obtained and the need for establishing liberty and fraternity in actual practice, so that every resident in India could feel identified with the Indian Nation. Then again, we took it for granted that the fruits of economic development that we are embarking upon will automatically trickle down to the lower income levels of Indian society and lead to the abolition of poverty and unemployment.

It took us some years to realise that this was not correct and that removal of poverty and unemployment should be treated as a distinct part of the

to make the unemployed and the poor and the hungry to take pride in Indian nationality when they had been fed with the rhetoric that independence will deal with their economic problems and bring them up to better and more secure levels of living.

Cultures and National Assets

Then again, we did not take sufficient care to see that cultures other than Hindu culture are also taken into account as national assets. It is true that we talk of the composite culture of the country, but no attempt was

made to give the concept a concrete content, nor the kind of national campaign of education that is required for making other cultures in the country a part of the national heritage and create in every Indian a feeling of pride not only in Hindu culture that had come down from the ages, but also from the cultural contributions of other religions and communities all of which went to make the composite or integrated whole of Indian cultural inheritance.

We also thought that with partition, Hindu-Muslim problem would have been solved forgetting that there were millions of Muslims living in the country, who were feeling insecure and to see to their security and economic uplift, special attention had to be paid to their problem, especially in the North where the Muslims had worked for partition and Hindus were very conscious of the past, forgetting changes that have taken place after independence.

Then we went in for the principle of linguistic states, which I personally think, followed as a matter of course from the acceptance of formation of regional Congress Committees on linguistic basis independence. We did not take sufficient care to see that along with linguistic states were inbuilt antidotes to their assuming chauvenistic or negative character from the point of view of Indian national unity. Even when we went for a national link language, we chose a regional language as National Language, because it was spoken by a larger number of people than any other Indian language, instead of Hindi-Hindustani which Gandhiji has been advocating. Even if we did right in adopting Hindi as national link language, special attempts should have been made to enable the masses of the country to communicate with each other and also for the classes to have communication with the masses.

Unity in Diversity

We ought to have taken care to see that the Hindi language was so re-adapted and developed so as to take in as many words as was possible, from other Indian languages, so that all linguistic groups will feel that they have made their own personal contribution to the development of the national link language. This was explicitly set forth in the Constitution, but it was not effectively followed with the result that Hindi became even more Sanskritised and divorced from other Indian languages including Urdu with which it had been associated in the past for bringing into existence the colloquial language of Hindustani. The question is how to make the multiple societies of India into one national Indian society. Obviously this cannot be done by destroying the individual identities of the multiple societies and making one homogeneous unit of Indian society. We have to retain the diversity of Indian society and at the same time envelop it with an over-riding unity of one Indian society.

It must be made crystal-clear
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Thoughts on Punjab

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have never done before—twice on the highway and on Friday they killed 6 members of one Communist family. A fortnight earlier, Delhi had been terrorised. There was an element of desperation in all these acts, a suicidal desperation. In short, the terrorists were sending us a message: You escalate the level of violence against us, we will escalate the violence against Hindus crazily. To suggest that we take heed of this message would be no act of cowardice, just realism.

What is to be done? Should we halt Mr. Ribeiro and tell him to suspend his war? No, that would be asinine. But someone must tell the dullards in Delhi that the political solution of the Punjab problem must be urgently and actively pursued even while Ribeiro and his men are busy at their task. By playing politics in the state, Mr. Gandhi finds himself in a catch-22 situation. Can he ask Barnala to take over from where he left off? Will Mr. Gandhi confess that President's rule has been a disaster?

these extremist leaders demand? Well their most important demand—the dismissal of Barnala—has been granted. The re-employment of suspended Sikhs in the army has also been virtually conceded.

Only of Jodhpur detenus problem remains. On more than one occasion there have been calculated leaks from New Delhi that, except for a handful, most of the others would be released. Where, then, is the difficulty? Why aren't we talking to those Sikhs in Punjab who have some control over the terrorists?

I yield to no one in my admiration for Julio Ribeiro. I don't think we have had another police officer of his calibre and dedication. I also know he is a national hero because he personifies the fight against Evil. Alas, his personality in Punjab today has become so controversial, so enmeshed in false propaganda that his presence in the state does more harm than good. Large numbers of Sikh youths bear a personal grudge against him. If

gun. To conclude, as some Indians are erroneously, but dangerously, concluding, that every Sikh is a potential Khalistani is as mindless as saying that every Muslim is a potential Pakistani. The recent outburst by a Congress (I) M.P. against the Mayor of Vadodara, questioning the wisdom of Vadodara's citizens for electing "a Sikh" as the Mayor of their city when Punjab is burning, is dangerously in sane.

Even more dangerous is the resurgence of the pre-Operation Bluestar thinking, that the nation needs "strong-arm techniques," or as the Prime Minister implied, brute force, to curb terrorism. Mr. Ribeiro has already immortalised his "bullet-for-bullet" strategy. When one raises the voice of dissent, underlining the fact that wanton display of State power and repression in Punjab will only create greater alienation and encourage those youths who are held without trial or due process of law to take up arms, one is confronted, rather moralistically, with the argument that while sympathy for such individuals is all right, one should also have sympathy for the victims of terrorism.

Sympathy has to be a consistent emotion. The two are not mutually exclusive. The fact that we have a government which is representative of the people, since it was elected by all of us, makes it imperative that the State devise strategies and policies which are

faces an extraordinary crisis, but that does not give the State the right to turn its back on laws which are meant to protect us all. The point is that if terrorists behave in a particular way, it is expected of the State that it will not behave in the same way. The State is, and will be, judged by a higher morality. If the State were to imitate the terrorists in order to "wipe out" terrorism....

It is tempting and easy to create encounters, to browbeat the innocent citizens, to instil fear among the vulnerable, to make the minority community feel that it can survive in the country only at the mercy of the majority. But the long-run costs of such policies are high. They create the persecution complex among people, they create the sense of alienation in minorities, the feeling of unwantedness, which convinces them that for those among them who cannot live honourably any-more with the rest of us, it is best to create a homeland, in which they can lead their lives the way they want to. In a secular state, forces representing the administration have to be very careful about not suggesting to the minorities that the forces represent the majority. But as in Maliana and in the aftermath of the Delhi riots, the message that the minorities received is that those involved in harming the minorities are not even tried.

The first thing the State can do is to create conditions in which trust, and not suspicion, rules. Today, neither the State, nor the terrorists are trusted; worse, in Punjab, they are seen by members of one community in an equal light. This represents a failure on the part of the State, for which it must do some rethinking. But such rethinking may require fundamental, rethinking in the policies the State has pursued so far.

Rajni Kothari asks the question, "How long can we hold on to Punjab" (The Hindustan Times 19 July 1987). Summing up his surmise after extensive international interaction, he attests:

I have had occasion to meet a large number of Sikhs over the last 3 years. It is a community in deep trauma, born partly out of a highly symbiotic relationship with other Indians (particularly Hindus), partly out of a naive belief in the idea of the Indian State and its majesty, partly out of an overzealous role played by it in the project of modernising India completely throwing in confusion the deeper roots of the Sikh belief system, and partly of course due to the recently caused indignities, dishonour and humiliations which have hurt their egos (even more than the killings and physical or material deprivations). The attempts to heal or alleviate this trauma have been so half-hearted that they have, of necessity, backfired. Those who control the levers of power in the Indian State or have a role in moulding public opinion have shown little sensitivity to the psychological and emotive basis of a plural political order. The result has been a growing gulf and escalating violence, producing the groundwork for an ultimate

schism....

I will leave out of this article the communalism of the Hindu mind abroad; it is frightening and appalling but not too relevant to the state of affairs in India. Not so the Sikh state of mind abroad which is by no means irrelevant to what will happen here.

What came out of this engagement between clearly opposite points of view (those who believed in either the idea of Khalistan or Khalistan as a separate State knew that I had gone there with a view to persuade them out of their belief) was an extremely civilised discourse but one in which all shades of Sikh opinion were converging on one view: they had no honourable place in the present Indian State. Interestingly, as already indicated earlier, a large majority of them do not want to leave India but they still see no dignity for them in the way the Indian State is presently constituted, is presently being run (especially with respect to 'minorities') and is presently pursuing the Punjab problem... What I want to communicate here is what I felt to be not only strongly felt but well grounded reactions and responses on the part of those who very genuinely feel betrayed and slurred over by the Indian State, the media and the influential segments of Indian opinion. Many of them—still the vast majority—do not want to become part of what I openly described as a 'pipedream' of a 'Banana republic'. But few of them seem to know how not to.

"I am afraid the situation will not be very different in this country if the present tendencies as described earlier in this article continue and create conditions for a total sense of alienation and rejection by both the State in India and the mainstream organs of opinion and sentiment. It is height of irresponsibility to let Punjab adrift in the manner in which it has been ever since the Haryana logic exploded on the horizon and the terrorist logic followed suit. The Centre and the Congress(I) have lost Haryana. They are trying to hold Punjab by force. But for how long?"

The following day i.e. 20 July 1987 in The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, K.F. Rustamji insists on "Need for a new approach" to contain terrorism.

Can terrorism be ended?—is the plaintive question of everybody I talk to. Yes, if we can find a political solution—it can be ended at once. The plain fact is that we have not even begun to search for a solution. We refuse even to talk to those who are connected with terrorism. The Prime Minister says he will not negotiate till terrorism has been wiped out completely. Brave words! But they come from a man who has been driven into a corner for espousing the right policy of accommodation and compromise. By a strange logic, accord has become a dreaded word today. I wish we could explain to the powers that be how inadequately India is policed, despite all the fine men

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Widows and victims of Nov. 1984 riots staging a Dharna against Continuation of violence.

Rajiv Gandhi's loss of face is trivial compared to the possible loss of the republic. The government must square up to the unpalatable fact that some kind of dialogue has to be started with Badal. Tohra, Amarinder Singh, Darshan Singh Ragi and other "extremists". I repeat, extremists not terrorists. No one is suggesting that Buta Singh sit across the table with the leader of the Khalistan Commando Force, but the hard-core terrorist must be deprived of the "sanction" and "sanctuary" he gets from Sikhs in Punjab. If we talk to Badal and Ragi we will begin isolating the terrorists.

Isn't it catastrophic that while Punjab burns, the most influential and powerful state Sikh leaders are in jail? What do

the peace process has to be restarted in Punjab Mr. Ribeiro has to go."

Salli Tripathi writes in The Indian Post dated 15 July 1985, "More bullets won't bring peace to Punjab". He avers:

The witch hunt against Sikhs outside Punjab is as immoral and reprehensible as the terrorists actions. The banth organisers who cannot protect innocent citizens belonging to any community are the moral equivalent of the militiamen who stalk the streets of Beirut and Belfast, Khuda and Kankesanthurai.

The individuals who resort to terrorism do so precisely because in the open conflict of the ballot box they are going to lose. It is that desperation which drives them to take the

democratic, constitutional, and which respect the civil rights of all of us, including suspected terrorists.

Certainly, due process of law ties the hands of the State, and to some extent, the law and order mechanism will find it difficult to "extract" confessions, pursue suspects, and prosecute alleged terrorists in fair trials.

But the due process of law is not meant as an impediment, rather it makes it the responsibility of the State to prove the guilt of the alleged terrorist. If proving guilt is difficult, the State does not have the right to puncture the stomachs of suspected terrorists and dump them in rivers, deeds some police officers have reportedly condoned in Punjab. The State

No More Hiroshimas

A Visit to a Bomb City

—Maheep Singh

On the occasion of 42nd anniversary of the first nuclear bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945.

A few years back, when I was in Japan, I read a press report in the Mainichi Daily News, that Hiroshima had observed the 29th anniversary of the world's first atomic bombing on August 6, 1945 with a stern cell for an immediate and total ban on nuclear weapons. About 40,000 persons gathered in the Peace Memorial Park where a solemn ceremony had been held to pray for peace. At 8.15 a.m. the moment when an atomic bomb exploded over Hiroshima and killed an estimated 2,00,000 people, a bell was rung and a silent prayer was offered for the souls of the atomic bomb victims. A peace declaration adopted at the gathering was much sterner than those of the past years.



A few months, later when I visited Hiroshima, I was amazed to find a most beautiful, modern city with no scar of near total destruction about three decades ago except a damaged dome as a memory of that fateful event.

The story that I learnt of that most dreadful day was deeply moving and absorbing. On the afternoon of August 5, the day before the dooms day, Professor Hohitaka Minura of Hiroshima Bunri University was lecturing to a group of 600 Army Officers assigned to the Hiroshima garrison. The theoretical physicist analysed recent developments in military science for an hour or so.

Then, during the subsequent question and answer period, a youngish lieutenant colonel asked, "Could you tell us, Sir what the atomic bomb is? Is there any possibility that the bomb will be developed by the end of this war?"

The professor picked up a piece of chalk and drew a rough sketch of chemical reactions of the black board, as he explained "Our scientists including Dr. Yoshio Nishina of the Tokyo Institute of Physics and Chemistry have theoretically penetrated the secret of nuclear



fission. Once applied to practical use, their findings will produce a far more powerful bomb than the conventional ones. The bomb could be even smaller than a piece of caramel candy but if it exploded 500 metres above a populated city, it could possibly destroy 200,000 lives."

"When can we have that bomb?" the colonel asked his second question.

The professor mused for a second or two and then answered—"Well, it's difficult to say, but I can tell you this much not before the end of this war."

20 Hours Later

The physicist did not have to wait for the next war. At 08.15 on August 6, 1945, barely 20 hours after Prof. Minura's prophecy, the bomb-bay doors opened and the 'Little boy' dropped into the serene sky, 31500 feet above Hiroshima. Forty three seconds later a blinding purple flash streaked across the city. The professor, standing on the porch of his neighbour and talking to the head of the neighbourhood unit, had his body lifted and hurled inside the house. A moment later the gignatic explosion deafened him and in another moment everything around him was afire.

The people of Hiroshima were totally off guard. Japan's air defence system had long ceased being effective to counter the swarming B.29 s. The enemy bombers travelled so high and so fast that neither guns nor zero scramblers could possibly reach them. There was no other way then to let them gambol as they pleased.

The people had also become fairly accustomed to the daily air raids. The night of August 5-6 was one of the typical nights. The alarm was rounded at 00.25 August 6 and lasted for seven hours. At 7.31 of that doomed Monday the signal, "all clear over Hiroshima" was given by

the Army Defence H.Q. of the Chugoku area.

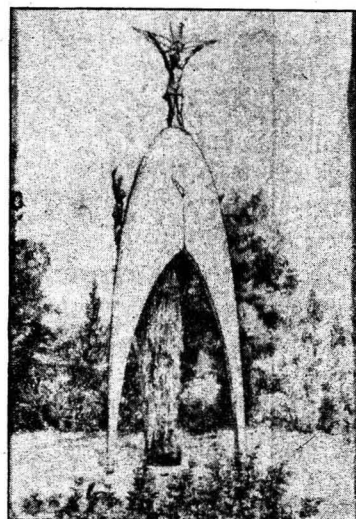
Normal Day

It was the beginning of a normal day. Housewives were preparing breakfast, children were getting ready to go to school, workers were already in their factories starting the machines. Volunteers of the civilian air defence unit climbed down from watch towers to rest.

Masanobu Furuta, a duty announcer of the NHK broadcast station at Hiroshima, heard a bell ringing. It was the Army Headquarters calling. He listened to the man on the other end of the line read a bulletin, "Three large sized enemy planes sighted at 8.13 over Saijo. Heading west in the direction of Hiroshima. Full precautions required."

Furuta ran into a studio, switched off the programme and started reading from the papers "Three large sized enemy planes sighted at 08.13 over Saijo. Heading west in the direction of Hiroshima. Full precautions...." When he sensed the whole room shudder, the ferro concrete building abruptly heaved and then began tilting slowly.

A big fireball, with a diameter somewhere between one



hundred to several hundred meters hung over the city. Heat waves spread out from this source of explosion at a speed of four kilometers a second. In the immediate vicinity of the hypocentre the earth was exposed to a heat of 6,000 degree centigrade. Together with it came the shock waves of the explosion equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT. They travelled at a speed of 4.4 kilometers per second applying an enormous pressure on the earth below from 4.5 to 6.7 ton per square meter, lasting for 0.4 second.

Mushroom cloud

Then the mushroom cloud shot up to as high as several thousand meters in the sky, sending forth radioactive emanations.

The fire engulfed the whole city and soon a strong wind started to blow from all directions. The violently disturbed atmosphere began pouring 'black rain' in a torrent. Many people who survived the initial brunt felt that each rain drop was as piercing as a hailstone. The 'black rain' lasted for two hours. Soon many were shaking from cold in the midst of summer.

Those unfortunate enough to have been at or around the blast centre simply disappeared. Those with in a radius of four kilometers suffered severe burns. Their white blood and lymph cells were destroyed. The characteristic symptoms were intense thirst, constant bleeding, violent vomiting and diarrhea the beginning of slow death.

The Imperial General Headquarters at Tokyo despatched two investigation teams the next day. Dr. Yoshio Nishina, the man who had "theoretically penetrated into the secrets of the atom" accompanied the Army team. As their DC-3 touched down at Hiroshima Airport, Lt. General Seizo Arisue, leader of the team, discovered that every single blade of grass at the airport had turned brown or bent in one direction. He looked towards the town and found nothing obstructing his view except a solitary tree trunk scorched totally black. No body came to meet them. They waited until finally a man came tottering out of a nearby shelter. It turned out to be the commander of the airport defence unit, a lieutenant colonel whose face was charred.

All the while that the team travelled through the flattened town of Hiroshima in a truck, Dr. Nishina remained silent.

Radioactivity

"Can you find a corpse without exterior injuries?" Dr. Nishina finally asked, "I want to see it dissected through a post-mortem."

The body of a soldier was brought to a laboratory. No

sooner had the first stroke of the surgical knife, exposed the entrails of the dead man than Nishina reached for the liver and pulling out the completely inflamed gland, he declared; "Do you see this inflammation? There is absolutely no doubt about it now. This is the atomic bomb."

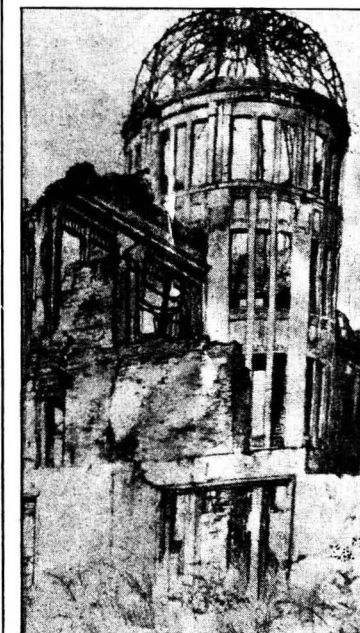
Japan's "Father of Nuclear Science" knew perfectly well what nuclear fission could do to the human body. He, however, died in 1951 from liver cancer. It was found at the time of his death that the number of his white blood cells was far below the average—the after-effect of his extensive trip in Hiroshima immediately after the initial radioactive contamination.

The exact figure of atomic bomb casualties is by no means definite, due to the loss of official documents and also due to the endless number of victims who are still dying from the after effects. The estimate by the municipal authorities of Hiroshima in August 1946 was 118,661 dead, 79,130 injured and 3,677 missing.

Besides, Japanese residents, there were an estimated 40,000 Koreans workers and their dependents living in the city at the time of bomb was dropped. Nothing is known about their fate.

Three days, later, on August 9, 1945 the second bomb was exploded over Nagasaki. For Nagasaki, it was the second martyrdom after the 17th century rebellion of 38,000 Christian faithfuls who fought the persecution of the Tokugawa shogunate and perished. This bombing killed 39,000 and injured 25,000.

And on August 15, 1945 Japan surrendered.



Peace Memorial Park

The area round the explosion has now been turned into the Peace Memorial Park with peace memorial museum, statue, tombstone, light of peace, a statue of the A Bomb children, auditorium and memorial town.

There is always a big rush of foreign tourists in Hiroshima. I was always curious to know the feeling of the Japanese, particularly of the people of Hiroshima towards Americans, who brought that disaster and humiliation to and upon Japan. It is also a well known fact that

Continued on page 15

Chipko Movement

An Assessment

Bharat Dogra

The Chipko movement launched to save trees in Western Himalayas has won widespread acclaim. This review of the movement's achievements also examines some misgivings and controversies about the movement.

In several parts of India the daily life of people and their livelihood is dependent on forests in a crucial way—their water sources, their fuel and fodder needs, the fertility of their land etc. Large scale commercial exploitation of forests in this situation has seriously disrupted the life and livelihood of those people. Uttarakhand—the districts of Tehri, Pauri, Chamoli, Uttarkashi and Dehradun (Garhwal) and Nainital, Almora and Pithoragarh (Kumaon) in Uttar Pradesh—is one such region.

There can be several responses to such a threat of livelihood. Such responses can be seen in Uttarakhand as well as in other parts of India placed in a similar situation. Some people may think that it is very important to check this deforestation, some may think that it is important to help the exploited forest workers, some may think that instead of allowing the timber and other forest produce to be taken away it is important to set up local industries based on this to provide employment to local people.

expected that such differences would also be reflected in the forest movements that would spring up in response to the problems. There is nothing unnecessary or undesirable about such difference of opinion. In the context of Uttarakhand, in the natural course of events such difference have been reflected also in the famous 'Chipko' (hug the trees) movement.

However, if we go back to the basic problem of the threat to the life and livelihood of people arising from deforestation and remain sincere and honest in finding solutions to it ignoring other considerations—then it should be possible to resolve or settle many of the conflicts and tensions which have been arising out of differing perceptions.

The basic needs of water and fuel of the people of Uttarakhand are dependent on the forests, and their basic livelihood of agriculture—cum—animal-husbandry is also dependent on forests. Forests have been badly degraded over the years creating shortages of daily needs and disrupting the basic

demand local forest-based industry should adjust their demand in such a way that the creation of new employment in forest based industry is not at the expense of the more basic needs of life and livelihood of villagers. It would be a futile policy indeed which for providing employment to 20 people in a saw mill for 5 years destroys the source of life and livelihood for ever for a much larger number of villagers.

New Jobs

On the other hand, where the potential for new jobs based on forests which (a) do not pose a threat to forests and (b) which do not conflict with the basic needs of people and such new jobs should certainly be made available a local people near their homes. It should be remembered that in Uttarakhand we have a situation which is the result of decades of relentless destruction of forests and only very limited demands on the remaining forests can be made. In such a situation the priority of course goes to the basic needs of villagers.

It is in this context that the achievements of Chipko movement in Uttarakhand should be evaluated. As said above, several different thinkings were reflected in this movement as in any other forest movement. It is not really necessary to go into the details of this difference of opinion. It is even less necessary here and even undesirable to go into the controversy of which though-process constitutes the real chipko movement. Suffice it to say that the Chipko movement consists essentially of:

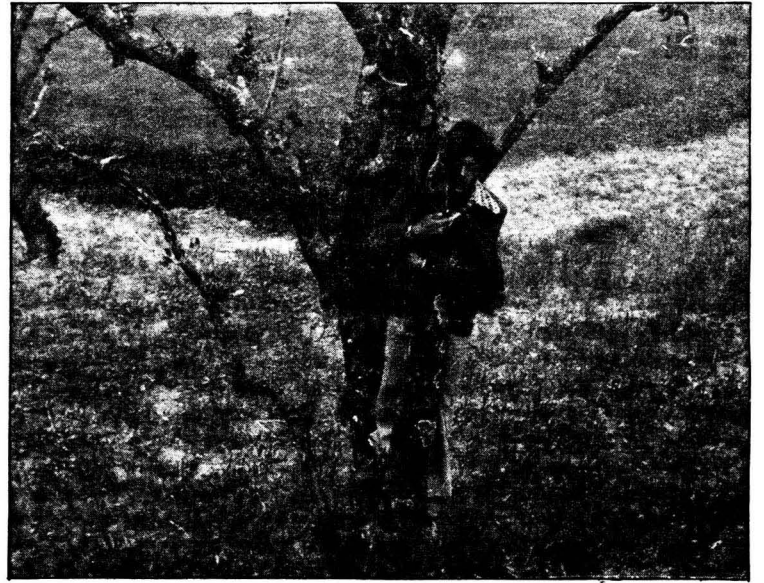
- An educational campaign, including long and exhausting foot-marches for learning about the forest related (and other) problems of people and their environment, as also for telling people about the need to save forests. This information is then disseminated to the people as well as officials and discussions are also held with officials, scientists, academicians etc. both for throwing wider light on problems as also for exploring the possibility of remedial action by the government.
- Protest movements including demonstrations as face to face confrontation with contractors, officials, policemen etc. in forests to save trees, including the method of hugging or embracing them.

Some other important aspects of the movement may be pointed out. In the course of its development for nearly a decade and a half in eight districts of Uttarakhand, it has remained almost entirely peaceful with one or two possible exceptions. Secondly,

the ideal of activists remaining away from various funding agencies for development work has been much emphasised, although not all activists have been able to follow this, leading to much dismay among the more idealist activists.

The Success

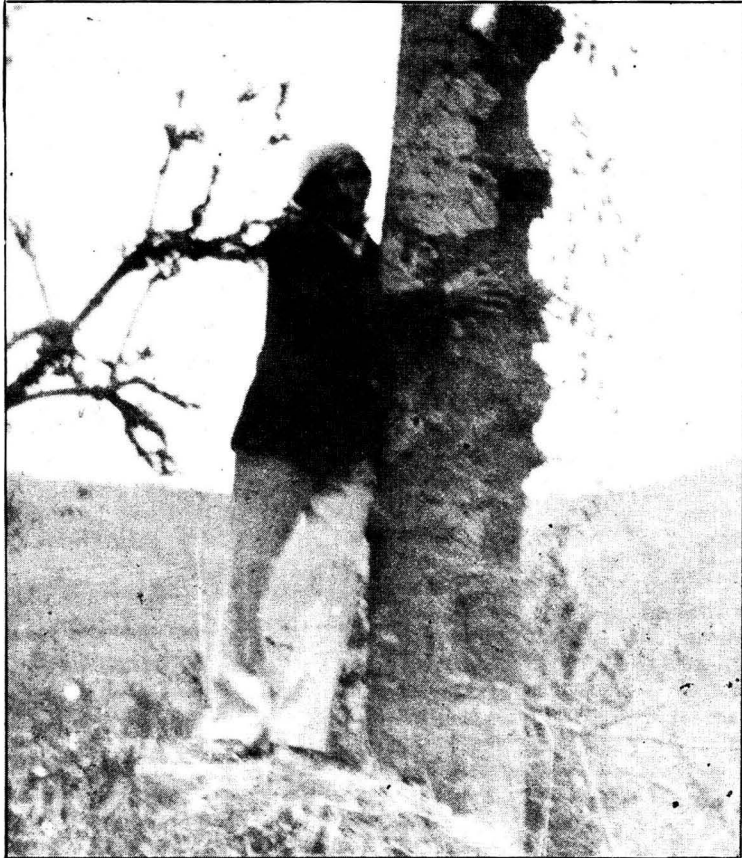
Largely as a result of the educational and protest activities of this movement, pressure was built on the government to declare—despite stiff opposition by several vested interests—a ban on the commercial felling of green trees above an altitude of 1000 metre in the entire Uttarakhand region. Apart from this, as a result of the educational work, people in many villages have been motivated to protect their community forests and meet their needs from forests in such a way that damage to them is minimised.



This achievement has increased the possibility of sustainable development work in the area but of course, this itself is not adequate for this purpose and much remains to be done. In the area of forestry and other areas.

Meanwhile, vested interests have launched a sinister campaign against the movement, alleging that people are unable to meet their timber needs for housing etc. and development works like roads and schools are stalled due to the problems in getting

clearance for felling which stand in the way. However, the Chipko movement never said that development works should be stalled, nor did it say that people should not get timber for housing—instead it always demanded meeting local needs first from dead and mature trees instead of exporting this timber. Thus this campaign should be exposed for what it is an effort of vested interests with a greedy eye on the remaining forests of the area to give a bad name to the movement which stands for saving and protecting them.



Different Views

Such differing views have been held and reflected by social workers and social work organisation in different parts of the country. It is only natural that such differences of perception and opinion should exist in Uttarakhand also. It is equally to be

source of livelihood. In most areas the result of decades of exploitation and destruction is seen today in such a precarious forest cover that it cannot meet even the essential needs of fuel and fodder etc.

Under such conditions those who say that local resources should be used for local employment and for this reason



The Empowerment of Women

—Susheela Kaushik

(For some years now, a new phrase, the Empowerment of Women, has become internationally popular. More and more people are beginning to believe that it is not only a question of giving equality to women, it is also a question of giving them the necessary power to be equal to men. This idea is incorporated in the New Policy on Education adopted in 1986 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

In this contribution by Susheela Kaushik, Profesor of Political Science at the University of Delhi, an attempt has been made to clarify the concept for the empowerment of women).

It is necessary, while formulating any policy, to be clear on the values and goals of the policy. This is all the more so, in the case of a policy for Education, since education is the premier instrument for including the values and disseminating the goals on a wide scale, at an early stage of a citizen's intellectual evolution.

In the absence of a clarification and clearcut presentation, the policy approach as well as the programmes for implementation, run into the danger of becoming mechanistic, value free and quantative target oriented.

The need for women's education is often approached in purely arithmetical calculation or, at best as a constitutional requirement. A strict adoption of the provision under Article (16) of the Constitution, has made many identify the universalisation of education as the aim, and the low rate of enrolment and the high rate of drop out of girls at the elementary level, as the reason for the non-achievement of this aim.

While such a quantitative computerisation is necessary in attempting the removal of illiteracy in India and particularly the acute illiteracy among women, it should not be allowed to result in obliterating the values behind the provisions for education, as well as the goals of this policy. Unfortunately this has been the trend of, and the approach towards the educational policy in India all along.

The implications of the provisions, hence, are significant, and can be brought under two broad heads (i) This attempt at education is aimed not only for women, but also for men. (ii) The new policy would approach education as one which will be oriented to specific goals and which will be value-based in terms of the women's place and role in the society.

Goals of Education

The goal of education in this context is one of bringing about gender equality. Such an equality in turn, needs to be interpreted not as a static concept but in terms of its dynamic and progressive connotations. The issue of gender equality has often been approached in terms of, what has been called a negative terminology, "the non-

discrimination" on the basis of sex. Such an approach which forms the basis of much of our earlier policy approaches on equality as well as the constitutional provisions, made equality a static concept as well as an end in itself, even if achieved in practice and not merely on paper.

It has however been felt, that beyond this equality, and perhaps in a way even to achieve this, the women needed certain welfare and protective measures. Most of our national policies, hitherto, in the various developmental spheres have been based on the assumption that a vast majority of Indian woman, despite the guarantee of constitutional equality, will not be able to enjoy or utilise the rights automatically. Over the years, such protective and welfarish measures have developed a legitimacy only because such an equality in real terms is still far from achievement, though at the same time it is a reflection on the efficacy of the protective measures. At times, they have abridged women's freedom. All the same, we perhaps in India have not yet reached a stage of women's development when we can give up these protective measures.

The realisation of the inefficacy of the protective measures, as well as their limitations from the point of view of providing women with a certain self awareness and reliance, has led to this evolution of a developmental approach to women's issues. This lays stress on women's role and participation in development, rather than they be a mere recipient of development both for themselves and the society.

Equality and Participation

Equality and participation in development, supported by state policies, are the essential components in the aim for women's development. But even these may not be treated as the ultimate objectives for the women's development policies or activities. Gender equality and equal role for men and women in the development activities should in turn aim at a higher social goal namely, the bringing about of a new just and humane Social Order.

Such a New Social Order will demand a much active and interventionist role on the



part of the women; a full utilisation of their potential particularly in spheres where they are especially best equipped for bringing about such a transformation-viz a new ecological and environmental order; in preserving better the peace in the society, in the removal of poverty etc.

Women as a group cut across religion/Caste/SC/ST positions. This gives them a leverage and power in facing the present challenges, particularly in India; a positive role on her part becomes imperative in the context of today's political problems in India and to build a strong, united and progressive Indian nation. Woman have the much needed potentialities as well as the stake in them.

In order to play this role as the agent of such a transformation towards a better tomorrow, women have to be empowered.

Such empowerment of women would imply and require, (i) releasing them from their present constraints, (ii) make their resources, capabilities and energy available to the wider society, and (iii) make them play their 'full and proper' role in the society, by assuming wider responsibilities.

Education and Empowerment

Education has a role in providing operative mechanisms by which women can be released from these constraints. These can be spelt out.

I. The Psychological Constraint: a low self image, inhibition, sense of dependence, etc. which traditions and the socialisation process have instilled in them, and which in turn have led to the domestication of women; the

increasing consumerism and a sense of withdrawal due to economic development. (i) The values and content of education need to project women as equal partners in the family, as well as their role in work and employment and their contribution to social production. (ii) It should emphasise women as producers-self reliant and income generating; such role needs to be combined with a social identity and commitment-both for men and women.

II. Social/Sociological Constraints: the present nature of content and curriculum of education, training of teachers and education methodology. (i) These need to be replaced by a content which equips women to undertake wider social responsibilities, by inculcating in them a social commitment; to negate the negative impact of culture/religion/caste determined factors that promote the stereotyped inferior position of women.

III. Physical, Biological and Structural Constraints: The need to break the physical isolation of women and the notion of biological impurity and inferiority the need for imparting knowledge of human body, reproductive education, health education, and inculcation of a scientific and rational attitude to life.

IV. Economic Constraints: Poverty and Work Burden; (i) increased provision of jobs for women and men, particularly in the rural areas, so as to help in removing the disparity (4.1 of NPE) as well as in releasing the girls and women for education. (ii) Provision of support structure (4.3 and 5.2 of NPE) so as to reduce the time and energy consumption of women and girls in terms of fetching fuel, fodder and drinking water as well as their domestic responsibilities, and release them for education and participation in social responsibilities. The Draft Outline of NPE had clearly mentioned these services. But they have been left out in the final policy document. (ii) Early



Continued on page 13

- Minority Rights
- Civil Liberties
- Equality for Women
- Democratic Values
- Environmental Protection

A.I.R. and Doordarshan

Not to be invited by the A.I.R. or Doordarshan is some kind of a distinction in today's situation. By and large only such people get invited, by these two government outfits as are either very outstanding or are willing to echo what the government says. Since I belong to neither of the two categories, it is very rarely that I get invited.

On one or two occasions I have had the unenviable experience of being invited to take part in discussions. Since some kind of editing is unavoidable in all such programmes, one usually ends up by having one's position misrepresented. Around the 20th of January this year, I was asked by the Doordarshan to take part in a programme on the 26th of January. It was to be called the State of the Republic.

Going by my earlier experience I refused to participate. However I was given a definite assurance that there would be no misrepresentation of any kind. It is gratifying that the word was fully honoured. Not only that there was hardly any editing in the programme and it went across as it should have.

The occasion for saying all this is because of what happened early this month. After the two bus killings in early July in Punjab and Haryana respectively, the A.I.R. invited me to take part in a discussion in which Shri Uma Shankar Dixit, an official of the Ministry of Home Affairs and a journalist were to take part. I expressed my misgivings but was told that I need not entertain any.

The recording went along reasonably well. Everyone agreed that the killings were deplorable and the retaliatory action was equally deplorable. Once we started grappling with the issue why terrorism was not losing momentum the differences of approach and perception started becoming apparent. While others were not prepared to go beyond vague generalities, I referred to the killings in Delhi in November 1984, the mindless repression in Punjab and the general state of insecurity in which the minorities live. As could have been anticipated, these references were challenged by other participants. I cannot say what was eventually broadcast. This is for the simple reason that while the recording took place for little over 40 minutes, the actual broadcast was for 28 minutes, I am told was never informed as to the actual time of the broadcast. Consequently I do not know what ultimately happened. Anyone is free to draw his own inference.

Most of what has been said above is a kind of curtain raiser to another programme telecast by Doordarshan some time ago. On June 19, 1987 it was announced that a film entitled 'Widows of Punjab' was to be telecast. The Doordarshan was approached formally and it was pointed out that a programme of this nature was likely to give rise to genuine misunderstanding and fan communal passions. Furthermore, would the Doordarshan not feel obliged to telecast similar documentaries on the widows of Delhi, Kanpur, Bokaro, Meerut and others? This point of view was given some weightage and the programme was not telecast. It was explained however, that the documentary though somewhat unbalanced in the beginning had been given the right balance now. Nothing more could be said however unless one had seen the documentary and formed an opinion.

An opportunity to do so was given to some people three weeks later. In the opinion of most people who saw this documentary, there was not much to say in criticism of the documentary. But the question still remains. Are widows to be found only in Punjab? Were they not to be found in Delhi as well as in Meerut? In fact the 1984 November killings in Delhi left behind thousands of them and 1200 of them were being given monthly pensions by the Gurdwara Committee in Delhi. Why is it that their plight has not been projected?

This was not to say that the widows in Punjab were not in an equally unfortunate position. They were, without question. What was being questioned, however, was the motive of Doordarshan in being selective. The whole exercise smacked of partisanship and raised doubts about the credibility as well as the objectivity of Doordarshan.

Doordarshan got over the difficulty by giving the documentary a different title. It was now described as 'Tain Ki Dard Na Aaya'. Translated into English it means 'Did it not grieve you?' The words came from a famous poem of Guru Nanak in which he protested against the killings and massacre by emperor Babar when he invaded India. Towards the end of the song, after having described all the death and destruction that he had been a witness to, Guru Nanak raised the question. Did it not grieve you to see all this?

This is not to criticise the authorities of the Doordarshan. The officials behaved correctly at every stage. What are they to do however, if they are overruled by their political bosses. The trouble both with the AIR and the Doordarshan is that they are not allowed either to be independent or to be professional. In all cases the decisions are made on political considerations. The above recital of events is meant only to underline that point of view.

—Amrik Singh

Prisoners of the Past

Amrik Singh

The simplest answer to this political line therefore is that repression, and indeed continued repression, will not lead to that happy state of affairs where those who wish to impose their will succeed in doing so. The Congress-I cannot disown its past policies nor can it usher in a new set of policies. The attempt at a settlement in July 1985 misfired for the basic reason that the victory in December, 1984, has been won on the slogan of unity and integrity of the country. Emotions had been around and once aroused cannot be put to sleep so easily again.

With everyday that passes, the policies of the ruling party are becoming less and less viable. We are fast approaching a stage when the whole package of policies represented by the Congress-I would get today rejected. Two recent instances that come to mind are the rout of the Congress-I in Haryana and the two gruesome bus incidents.

Some people might wonder what is the connection between these two developments. On the face of it there is none. In actual fact both of them are related to Punjab and the policy followed towards that state over the years by the Congress-I. For almost four decades, the Congress-I played one community against the other. Almost every single development in Punjab during these decades can be explained in terms of this approach adopted by the Congress-I. To have projected Haryana as a counter weight to Punjab was also a part of that strategy.

One significance of the recent Haryana election is that Haryana decisively shook off the mantle of tutelage cast upon that state. It is difficult to judge what this newly discovered sense of identity is going to lead to. But whatever it leads to, people in Punjab should know how to come to terms with it. Currently the Haryana posture is somewhat belligerent. To assume, however, that this is the final posture would be to misread the situation. There are elements within the government which would like the past to be projected into the future. But there are also elements which recognise that in the past they were manipulated from Delhi and what they said or did not represent their genuine feelings or interests.

Three Sources

How does all this relate to Punjab and the terrorism that is riding high? Terrorism in Punjab is born of three sources and each one of them must be recognised as an important element. One is a sense of grievance. For several years past there has been no dearth of instances where, at first the Akalis and later almost the entire body of Sikhs, have felt discriminated against. In pursuit of a political strategy which most definitely led to the

return of the Congress-I to power, Mrs Indira Gandhi deliberately permitted the credibility of the State administration to be destroyed. For almost two years (1982-84) there was hardly any law and order in that state. Intervention was called for not in the manner it took place (Bluestar and all that) but much earlier and in a productive and more decisive way. Had that been done, the alliance between smuggling and crime on the one hand and fundamentalism on the other hand might not have got cemented in the manner it did.

It is this alliance between the criminal elements on the one hand and the administration and the politicians on the other hand which is the second cause of terrorism in that state. This alliance does suffer some occasional setbacks. For instance, when the President's rule is imposed, the politicians tend to lose their effectiveness. One of the grievances of the Congress-I MLAs today is that though they should have a bigger say than anyone else in the current situation, they are not allowed to interfere with administration. Were they to do so, it would be almost certain however that, in more cases than otherwise, they would intervene in favour of those whose conduct is questionable, if not worse.

In plain terms, there is hardly any difference in terms of values and attitudes between those who are in the Congress-I and in other parties. They all have their links with shady characters and derive sustenance and support from them.

Willing to Die

But to return to the argument in hand, the third factor in the continued sway of terrorism is the willingness of hundreds of people to die. Part of their conviction comes from the tradition of martyrdom in Sikhism but part of it comes from the recklessness that goes

with criminal activities (and approximately half of them come from that background). But more important than these two factors is the unremitting sense of injustice from which the Sikhs suffer. Most of them perceive it like this; the Centre wants to humiliate and destroy us. A large number of people may question this perception and disagree with it. But the perception is genuine and wide spread. For one thing it is the perception of most Sikhs in Punjab and elsewhere, for another there is considerable evidence in support of such a perception.

One simple thing should illustrate what is being said here. What happened after the Bluestar in Punjab during the army regime was arbitrary and lawless in a considerable measure. That apart, what happened in Delhi in November, 1984, has sunk deep into the Sikh psyche. Had a genuine attempt been made to punish those who were guilty, it might have been different. On the contrary, for reasons everyone understands a systematic attempt has been made to underplay and whitewash whatever happened. This will not do.

Several instances have come to light where people who suffered during the riots have gravitated towards terrorism. That similar things are happening to individuals and families in Punjab is also fairly well documented by now. To put it bluntly, through harassment and arbitrary actions which in the ultimate sense in what the police does, while a certain number of terrorists are being liquidated, quite a number of new ones are being born. This is a double-track and it is difficult to judge what will be the eventual outcome of this process of liquidation of old terrorists and the birth of new ones.

Closing his Options

The ruling party has got itself into a bind. One part of the bind is that it has no choice except to use the machinery of law and order that is at its disposal. There is no doubt that repression is much more effective today than it was a year or two ago. At the same time, there should be no doubt that whatever might be done, the functioning of the police as constituted today can never be free of graft, corruption and highhandedness. This is how the police functions all over and this is how it functions in Punjab. In other words, the instruments at the disposal of the state cannot but inflict serious and, sometimes fatal,

In plain terms, there is hardly any difference in terms of values and attitudes between those who are in the Congress-I and in other parties. They all have their links with shady characters and derive sustenance and support from them.

Crisis in Congress Phantoms and Phobias

-Raj Gill

damage upon those whom it seeks to serve.

But more serious than that is the fact that in search of an illusory gain (victory in Haryana) the centre dismissed the Akali government. This is not to suggest that that government was able to deliver the goods; only now there is no alibi left for the Centre. Earlier it could blame the Barnala government and indeed it did so on a number of occasions. Now it cannot do the same and is directly responsible for what happens in that state. As if that was not deplorable enough the Prime Minister has been making somewhat unconsidered statements in this behalf. During the Haryana election he said that the President's rule would continue as long as terrorism is not liquidated. As a sequel to the bus incidents he has taken the position that there will be no discussion with terrorists. By themselves both the positions are defensible. But the question to ask is if a mature politician should take such rigid positions and close his options.

Not only that, having launched on the policy of repression the Centre is not likely to go back on it now. And yet the fact of the matter is that there are limits to repression as also to the theory of hostages. Developments during the last few years have underlined these limitations. Anyone who chooses to ignore them will prove only one thing that he is unwilling to learn from experience.

No-win Situation

In this no-win situation the BJP keeps on plugging the line that Punjab must be handed over to the army. As a slogan it is catchy; as a political line it is self-defeating. One may reasonably ask the BJP: what is it that the army will do that the police is unable to do today? Secondly, what if the army also fails? That can happen and is bound to happen. We are not living today in a world where a whole people can be liquidated. Individuals can be and are being liquidated; but not a whole people. Those who think like that need to reexamine their assumptions.

The simplest answer to this political line therefore is that repression, and indeed continued repression, will not lead to that happy state of affairs where those who wish to impose their will succeed in doing so. The Congress-I cannot disown its past policies nor can it usher in a new set of policies. The attempt at a settlement in July 1985 misfired for the basic reason that the victory in December, 1984, had been won on the slogan of unity and integrity of the country. Emotions had been aroused; and once aroused, cannot be put to sleep so easily again.

The ugly fact is that most political parties, the Congress-I, the BJP and indeed several others, are prisoners of the past. They will have to recognise one of these days that in this country of many diversities, regional identities have to be given their place. Equally important, any attempt to crush or destroy any ethnic group will not succeed and cannot succeed.

Those who are persisting in the attempt to impose their will upon regional and ethnic identities are bound to fail. In the bargain they will to three things. One is to deflect and thwart the development of the country from the path it ought to be pursuing. Development can take place only when there is peace and harmony, not when various ethnic and religious groups are at each other's throat. The second outcome of this short-sighted policy will be to cause totally avoidable suffering to those who believe in their rights as the citizens of a free country.

It is the third outcome, however, which is going to be the most damaging. In the attempt to carry out repression in one part of the country, the other parts of the country will not remain isolated. They too would become victims of the same affections of state repression in course of time. As they say freedom is indivisible. It is not possible to have freedom in the rest of the country and no freedom in Punjab. If freedom is being crushed in Punjab, it is bound to lead to something similar in other states too.

Is that a prospect that we should welcome?

How come Rajive Gandhi has lost credibility so fast? Where has the petina of innocent honesty, dew-fresh sincerity, moral indignation and hell-fire tempered dedication gone? Why so many people, in so strongly expressed sentiments, often crude and offensive, are out to condemn the Prime Minister, the Mr Clean, who undertook the gigantic task of cleaning the Augean stable of corruption, political immorality and disloyalty to the nation without the divine power of a Hercules, and almost got away with it, initially, because of his 'babe-in-the-forest' looks?

The question today is not whether Rajiv Gandhi stays Prime Minister or not; nor it is whether the Congress-I party is disintegrating, going out of power, verging on oblivion or not. The question is why is it happening? With every regime? With each succeeding Prime Minister, Congress, Janata or Lok Dal. Why does not anyone learn from the doings or misdoings of his predecessor? No amount of analysis of the present or preceding situations of the past decade or two answer these questions. Because the questions, in reality, precede the situations. As such, we have to go far back into the past, into the pre-independence period to find answers to these questions. In this we can be guided by a common factor at all times, "Disillusionment", which runs through the whole history of the Congress party. Disillusionment of the stalwarts with the party leader. It started with the elites of the Congress with Gandhi. It became a little more manifest with Nehru. It took a concrete form with Indira Gandhi and Janata and Lok Dal Prime Ministers. And now it is taking the form of a deluge with Rajiv Gandhi.

No amount of disinformation or stagemanaged rallies supporting Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi or for that matter the fiendish speeches delivered by him every day at his residence to the hired audiences which, in fact, adds to the disillusionment of the people when they confront a Frankenstein in place of a soft-spoken, smiling, honest-sounding and seemingly one with the people Prime Minister of about two years ago who not only won the hearts of angry and bitter people but also became the subject of a crush for the young, a prime minister who was loved and adored by the teenagers and those in twenties, will help recover the lost credibility.

Nothing New

All that is happening today within the precincts of the power lobby of the Congress-I government at the Centre or within the bounds of the ruling party, bounds which

are already breached at places, is nothing new for those acquainted with the history of the Indian National Congress, though it does appear to be alarming and ominous to those who put their faith in fairness, honesty, sincerity and dedication. One can understand fully the power-grip and power-tussel struggle in the Congress-I if one remembers that the Congress was never what it claimed to be, professedly stood for, and symbolically represented, that is, the will and the dream of the people. The bitter truth is that it did not represent either. The Indian National Congress, and the subsequent facades and masquerades of the party, were always the handmaid of the few who wanted to rule the country by might or by prerogative; who simply wanted to replace the alien rule by the native rule. All this sounds sacrilegious and crazy. It does. Because it tares the history of freedom fight and self-sacrifice of individuals for the good of the people as a whole. But the truth persisted that the good, welfare and the future of the people took always the second place to the wish of those who wanted to be in power; and when those were in the power saddle they wanted to stay there for ever, and at any cost even if it meant to go back on their words, promises and assurances; sacrificing the loyals and stomping the heads of those emerging strong; and even trampling the dreams and desire of the people for a wholesome, bribeless, lawful, fair and just society. It was as much true with Gandhi who nearly attained godhood, as Nehru, Indira Gandhi and now Rajiv Gandhi.

When we talk of Mahatma Gandhi in the aforesaid sense we talk of the mean or selfish streak in him. Of course, it will be stupid not to recognise his charisma in making the people to wake up to the sense of liberty and freedom and giving birth to a mighty movement for freedom struggle. Perhaps no

other man in this century could have achieved this. He did. But did he not exact a price for this? Did he not use the Congress or the mighty people's movement behind it for his own aggrandisement? Did he spare anyone who stood in his way, or was a threat to his power within and without the party? To realise the truth, in its sterling form, you will have to recall the spirits of Jinah, Subhash Chandra Bose, C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai, Bipin Chandra Pal and so on. Perhaps Gopal Krishna Gokhale understood Gandhi best of all the leaders. His comments on Gandhi are worth a deep thought. He said about Gandhi, "This personality is going to play a great part in the future of India. Mark my words. I may not live to see the day, but, I visualise clearly before me that Gandhi is going to be in the vanguard of a great movement when some of us are gone. Remember that on occasions when the passions of the people have to be raised to a great height of emotions or sacrifice or to be brought into close vision of high ideals, Gandhi is an admirable leader. There is something in him which at once enchains the attention of the poor, and he establishes with a rapidity which is his own, an affinity with the lowly and distressed."

"But be careful that India does not trust him on occasions when delicate negotiations have to be carried on with care and caution, and where restraint and tact will make for success, acting on the principle that half is better than no bread. He has done wonderful work in South Africa; he has welded the different sections of Indians into one patriotic and united community; but I fear that when the history of the negotiations, which, it was his privilege to carry on at one stage, is written with impartial accuracy, it will be found that his actual achievements were not as meritorious as is popularly imagined." Gokhale could not be more true in his prophecy.

Gandhi proved it amply in one instance, not to mention others. It was at the time of the second Round Table Conference to be held at London. The Indian National Congress at its session at Karachi in 1931 decided to participate in the conference. Gandhi was asked to represent the party at the conference with such other delegates as the Working Committee appointed. The Government was prepared to

Continued on page 11

PEOPLE'S RELIEF COMMITTEE

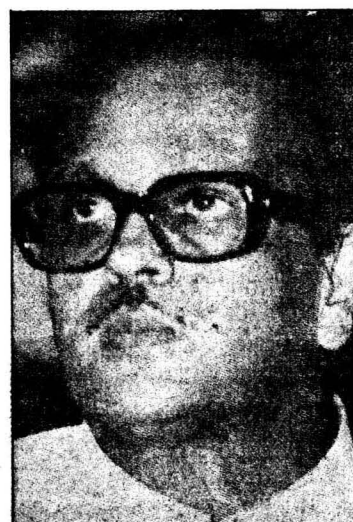
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EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

LT. GEN. J. S. ARORA (Retd.)
PRESIDENT



V.P. Singh
treated in established way.

Question of Credibility

Continued from page 1

party has reduced the entire issue to numbers and tactics. The issue is moral; how does a prime minister who is under a cloud of suspicion clear himself?

Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's statement deploring the incident in Parliament would have gone down better if he had instructed his partymen to devise a better strategy and not to oust Ajoy Biswas from the house for the entire session in the first instance. Their behaviour was worse than those of the Opposition. In fact, the Congress(I) being a majority party should have accommodated the Opposition. The heavens would not have fallen if Madhu Dandavate's privilege motion against the prime minister had been taken first.

to some kind of an agreement. The Opposition wanted the chairman of the proposed probe committee to be chosen from it; the Opposition was not even insisting on a majority in the probe committee. But the Congress(I) rejected the proposition. This only strengthens the conviction that the Congress(I) is trying to hide something.

In the series of recent disclosures it has been seen that what the government denied once came ultimately true. Take the Fairfax affair. At one stage it was said that its authorisation was wrong. V.P. Singh's subsequent statement proved that the detective agency was duly appointed and the government had given its sanction. Then came the Bofors kickbacks. The government,



Courtesy Front Line.

Even otherwise it should have precedence over the constitution of a parliamentary committee to look into the Bofors kickbacks. The Congress(I) is always keen to score points. The entire ugly scene could have been avoided if the Congress(I) has shown some accommodation. Now whatever understanding the two sides have developed over the last two and a half years is gone. The Opposition even boycotted the dinner given by the prime minister.

Nature of Committee

The probe which the Congress(I) is trying to have will not carry weight. Behind-the-scenes talks between the Congress(I) and the Opposition indicate that at one time the two were coming

including Rajiv Gandhi and K.C. Pant, went on saying that no middleman was involved. They are on record on this point in Parliament.

The situation is somewhat reminiscent of early 1975 when Mrs. Gandhi had been unseated on charges of electoral malpractices. Had Mrs. Gandhi gone to the people after the Allahabad judgement there is little doubt that she would have been returned to power. Similarly, if Rajiv Gandhi is so confident that he would be reelected by the people if he were to have a mid-term poll, but him opt for that. The heart of the problem is whether he can be believed. The burden of proving him not innocent is not on the people; it is his responsibility to prove that he is not guilty.

Now it has been proved beyond doubt that there were middlemen—both of them, wittingly or unwittingly, had misled Parliament. In the face of such denials and contradictions the record of the government or, for that matter the Congress(I) does not evoke confidence. Any probe on their behalf or by members belonging to them will be doubted in the country and the main purpose of the inquiry of clearing Rajiv Gandhi—will be defeated.

The Crisis in Parliament

H. G. Deshpande

Unlike the Rajiv-Longowal Accord signed on July 24, 1985, the accord with Sri Lanka has good chances of success. The initiative for the accord with Longowal came from Shri Rajiv Gandhi. That perhaps is a reason why it was not implemented.

In the case of the accord with Sri Lanka the initiative finally came from President Jayawardhne. Through an extraordinary process of self-analysis, he came to the conclusion that if the Sri Lankan situation was not to go out of this was the time to move. When the world first came from Colombo that Sri Lankan government was prepared to combine Northern and Eastern provinces into one unit, Delhi found it difficult to believe that such proposal was being made. Not only was it being made; it was being made in earnest. That is what led to the signing of the accord between the two countries.

Shot in the Arm

For Rajiv Gandhi, it was a God-Send. He was in serious political difficulty.

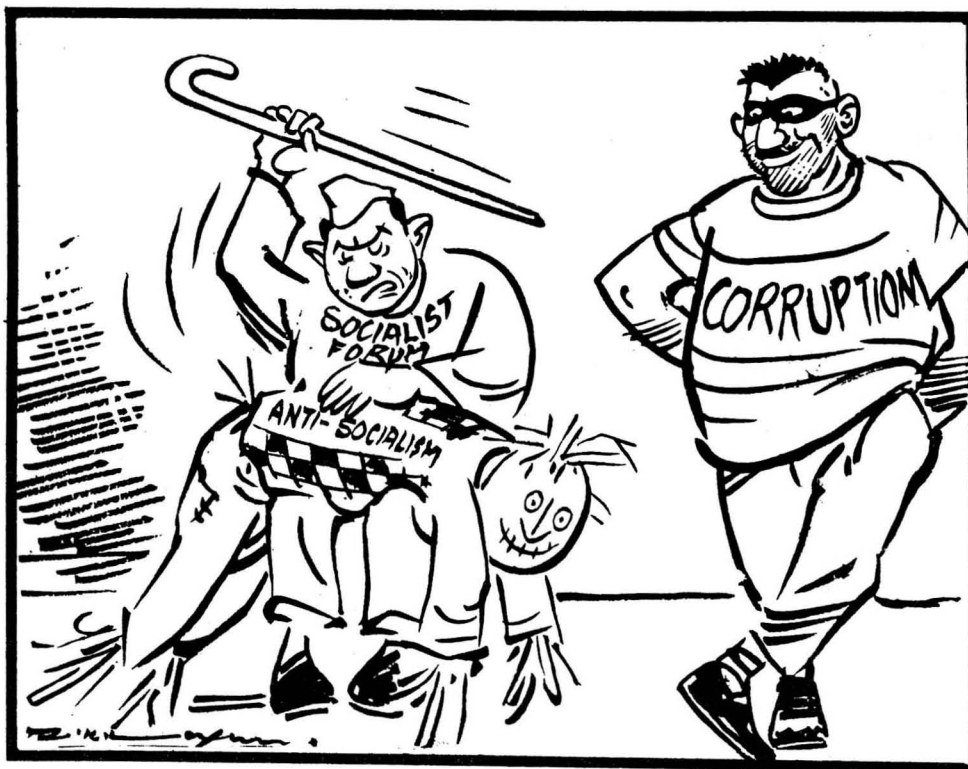
His image as Mr. Clean had been seriously damaged, perhaps beyond repair. Shri V.P. Singh had walked off with it and there was no knowing how far the undermining of Rajiv Gandhi would go. He badly needed a shot in the arm therefore. The accord with Sri Lanka was a step in that direction and nothing was more welcome than the political success such as the accord with Sri Lanka promised.

What next however? will it bail out Rajiv Gandhi from the mess in which he has landed himself. Despite all the denials, not many people are prepared to believe that the hands of Rajiv Gandhi's government are clean. There are people who think that he too is a part of the cover-up. Whether this is so or not one cannot say. Some part of the blame does attach to him. As the head of the government it was his duty to see that the government did not soil its hands with such unclean material as the Bofors deal.

What has happened in Parliament (in both the houses) points only to only one

direction. The Opposition will neither relent on a full and proper enquiry into this questionable deal nor will it be a party to a one sided enquiry which will eventually whitewash the government. The positions are getting rigid on both sides. The government cannot allow a free and roving enquiry into what has happened. That would damn it beyond repair. Not can it allow the Opposition to walk away with the clothes of the government and leave it naked and defenceless.

It is difficult to say how the situation would be resolved. This much is definite, however, that accord with Sri Lanka or no accord, the basic problem of the credibility of the government will have to be solved on the floor of both the houses and not across the Palk strait.



Courtesy Times of India

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Crisis in Congress

Continued from page 9

But this time when hero-worship is being given a side-kick there are two redeeming factors in its favour, besides the point that the present party leader does not enjoy either the moral supremacy of Gandhi or the greatness of Nehru or the popularity of Indira Gandhi. What Rajiv Gandhi has forgotten far too soon to his own regret is that he is there on the top by virtue of circumstances and by the bloody boon of a national tragedy, and not because of his own greatness or statesmanship.

allow 20 delegates. The Working Committee's consensus was for 15. Gandhi decided to go it alone. And he stuck to his decision adamantly. With the stature of Gandhi what it was then, nobody could challenge his decision. He boasted at the conference that he represented India. "Gandhi is India." Of course, he could not sway any demand in the absence of experts to advise him. The same mistake was committed about four decades later by Indira Gandhi who relished a similar claim, "Indira is India". It is true that she did not coin the slogan of self-glorification. But she did not put a curb on it too.

Nehru learnt it to his bitterness that how Gandhi manouvred pawns in the party chess. When he became President of the party in 1936 and was to select members of the Working Committee the leftist group was jubilant to have a predominant representation on it. They underestimated the astuteness of Gandhi who did not want Nehru to stray away from his personal control. When the committee was selected only three socialists were on it to everyone's consternation. Nehru the hope of the socialist wing too submitted meekly with

an eye on future laurels. The foundation of the Swarajya Party by Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das was also in protest to the dictatorial methods of Gandhi. Subhash Chandra Bose's parting with the party yet another manifestation of revolt against Gandhi's autocracy.

The Congress Edifice

The corner-stone of the Congress edifice has been all through "hero-worship". Whoever dared to challenge this precept, even symbolically or in an insinuation, was never tolerated. He was relegated to the rear, or things were made so hot for him that he had to leave the party or commit to some utterance on the basis of which he was thrown out of the party and to the doges however big and significant his contribution to the party and the country. The most glaring instance of such a cruelty was C.R. Das. On his death in 1932 the Statesman commented in its editorial, "Democracies are notoriously ungrateful. They use men to their utmost limit for their physical and mental power and then discard them and throw them on the Scrap heap." More recent instances were Nijalangappa, Morarji Desai, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Jagjivan

Ram, B. Gopala Reddi and Dr Shrimali. Still more recent are V.P. Singh, Arun Nehru, Arun Singh, Arif Mohammad Khan, V.C. Shukla and others. Bipin Chandra Pal made a very significant comment on this cult of "hero-worship". He said, "I cannot lend myself to the new spirit of hero-workshop in the masses which kills people's freedom of thought, and practically paralyses, by the dead weight of unreasoning reverence, their individual conscience. I am not blind to the possibilities of good in the great hold that Mahatmaji has got on the populace. But there is the other side, and in the earlier stages of democracy these personal influences, particularly when they are due to inspiration of medieval religious sentiments, are simply fatal to its future." Somehow we have not come out of this mire of 'unreasoning reverence' of leaders though half a century has elapsed since the above observation was made by Pal.

But this time when hero-worship is being given a side-kick there are two redeeming factors in its favour, besides the point that the present party leader does not enjoy either the moral supremacy of Gandhi or the greatness of Nehru or the popularity of Indira Gandhi. What Rajiv Gandhi has forgotten far too soon to his own regret is that he is there on the top by virtue of circumstances and by the bloody boon of a national tragedy, and not because of his own greatness or statesmanship.

The redeeming factors are that this time the disillusionment of the people with the government is far too strong compared to such a feeling in the past and that he has tried to slide out of a skid caused by lies, and failed. Throwing out ministers or party members does not relieve what in the mind of the people is already an indictment. Sacking ministers

will also not win back to him the trust of the people who firmly believed that their Prime Minister has lied to the Parliament and to the people on the issues of kickbacks from the Bofors and German submarines deals, the unaccounted for money in the

behind him. The other has the general popularity to stake his fight. Will it be authoritarianism or the good of the people which wins in the end, is to be seen. But the way the popularity of V.P. Singh is snowballing, thanks to the misbegotten notions of the Congress Chief



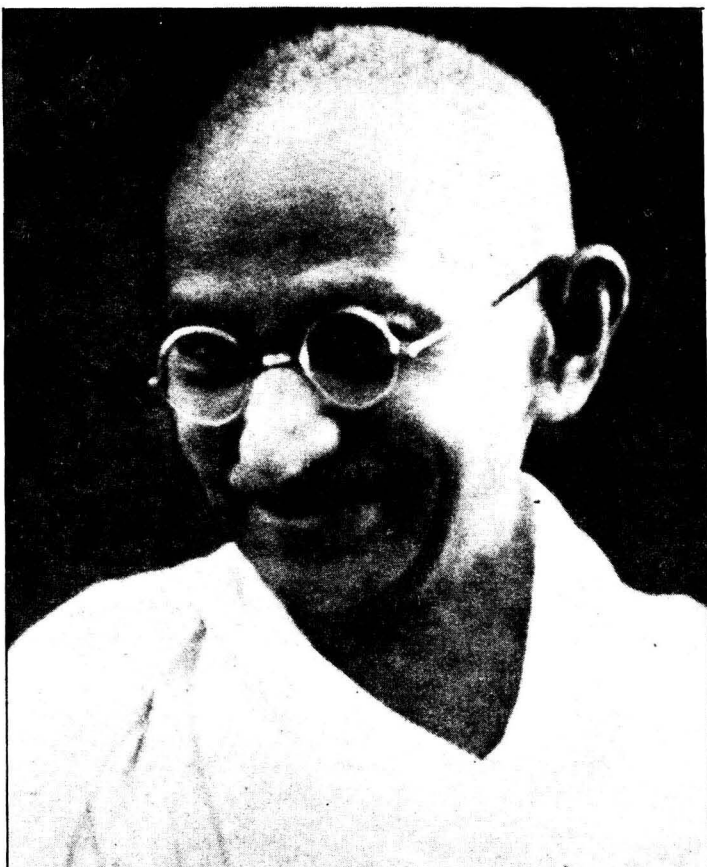
Congress President and Prime Minister; New approach or following the traditions.

Swiss banks, reprieve to the big business magnates who were to be tried under various fiscal laws for blatant violations of rules and the general loot that his close cronies from old times were indulging in.

Today the confrontation is between a Goliath and a David, namely, Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh. One has the party

Ministers and leaders who think that they can stem his march to ever increasing popularity by using force and refusing free movement to him, Rajiv Gandhi will either have to eat crow which will earn him the dignity of a human being capable of erring-or meet his Waterloo wherever and whenever it is.

No amount of disinformation or stagemanaged rallies supporting Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi or for that matter the fiendish speeches delivered by him every day at his residence to the hired audiences which, in fact, adds to the disillusionment of the people when they confront a Frankstein in place of a soft-spoken, smiling, honest-sounding and seemingly one with the people Prime Minister of about two years ago



M.K. Gandhi; Did he spare anyone who stood in his way



Jawaharlal Nehru with Subhas Chandra Bose

Peanuts

(Gujrati Short Story)

Pannalal Patel

It was around 10 'o' clock in the morning. Manubhai Seth's new Fiat car cut across the city going through numerous narrow lanes. Sitting on the back seat his eyes rested for a while at some distance. Piled sacks of peanuts stood like a mansion-firm and erect. The seth took a deep breath. Just a couple of days back these sacks had made him so happy; his spirit had revelled around the sacks, indeed he was in the seventh sky.

God knows who had incited the Centre at Delhi which announced a couple of days before on the radio, "The government has passed orders prohibiting the export of peanuts from one state to another with effect from to day" He got a telegram from an agent in Bombay, "Groundnut running down."

The groundnut markets, share bazars, businessmen dealing in peanut trade, shopkeepers and cooperative societies all over India were shaken as if a cat had entered a pigeon's hole. It looked the prices of peanut would descent to the bottom of the sea.

There were other businessmen also in the town alongwith Manubhai, all of them kept piling up money with the help of different cooperative societies and other tactics. They also had a definite say in political-affairs for some years. In this way Manubhai was sort of alienated or indifferent. He had paid little attention to the ruling party. He was always well informed of the mainstream of the market. One who is a chief minister today may be standing in a queue for commodities tomorrow. People often had fallen to such levels. Involvement in politics was beneficial only if it helped business. He had interfered in politics only with this idea in mind. He played many tricks of confidence. He had all the power in the sphere of peanut business.

All the same Manubhai was an alert and agile person. He could solve knotty problems on his finger tips. he could predict or fortell not only about mandia but also about politics. But this time, no body knows what happened; he forgot to keep his eyes open.

Sitting on the back seat of his car Manubhai could hardly see his godown on the outskirts of the town. He feared heart failure, while looking at the stock. Upto now he had not counted the losses during the two days that he had pledged many offerings to Srinathji. In a way he had dedicated all his assets to Srinathji and had consulted many astrologers. Sacks of peanuts were scattered outside the vast compound. Deliveries were still coming in against the previous deals Sacks were piled one over the other.

No sooner did the car reach near the lined sacks, his eyes fell on sacks. He saw some four to six open sacks. Labourers on the lines or the other workers

around could have hardly seen the children.

On seeing children eating peanuts anxiety turned into rage on Manubhai's face thinking it was their father's property. He ordered the driver to stop the car. When it stopped, he slammed the door of the car. Fifty years old Manubhai came out as if he was a young man of twenty five. Holding the corner of the dhoti, he ran towards the children.

Children recognised the Seth and like birds they swiftly dispersed. Only a seven year old girl stood confused. Seth saw the girl and went towards her. He yelled, "Stand up". Bewilderd, the girl stood up. Seth asked—'What are young doing?' The girl was numb. Her mouth was full of peanuts, Seth understood it all. He shrieked again, "What is in your mouth? Spit! I tell you take it out".

One, he was a Seth, second he was standing just in front, trembling with rage. The scared girl was numb. Whether she heard the words had to be seen. Seeing this stubborn girl, Seth lost his control. With one hand he squeezed both her cheeks and with the other took out the peanuts out of her mouth. Wiping his fingers with the dhoti, he came back murmuring, "As if everything is free; as if it is with out an owner! one peanut is worth one rupee here, do you know this? You people hardly care!

He had proceeded towards the godown, when labourers and others working their first saw Sethji's car near sacks and Sethji getting out of the car and running towards the children. They lost their senses. But when they saw that Sethji had gone to scold the children, their faces lit up with smiles. Their stopped hands started working again. In fact Sethji couldn't see the reactions on their faces.

The car entered the compound. The talk of Sethji's anger reached the manager. He had already made up his mind

what to say in defence. Children are children after all; what can one say to kids? Even if they are caught by the police, they will return again and steal.

But Sethji didn't mention anything about the incident. He had wiped his fin ger with the dhoti no less than four to five times. Despite it there was no relief for him. Stepping out of the car, he he ordered a servant, "Go get me a pot of water." After a pause he said, Bring soap and towel also."

Sitting in the varhadha he washed his hands with soap. He washed his right finger, which he had prodded in the girl's mouth, at least thrice. Wiping hands with the towel he came into the office. He had completely forgotten the purpose of his coming to office. After some effort, he said to the servant, "Call the manager."

The manager was already waiting to see him. He had made up his mind what to say on account of the children. With an opean pen in hand, he entered through the inside door, standing near the table. But Sethji asked some other

questions, "What is the stock till this date? ARE the deliveries due? How have we struck the deal on our own and at what price? What are deposits in the banks? How much have we drawn? Make detailed note of all this."

During this conversation Seth took out the handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the right finger many times, unconsciously. With some gathered confidence, he stood up and came out.

On seeing Sethji coming out the driver brought the car near him. Seth was still in the varandah but after some thought he came inside and asked a telephone number from the operator. When on the line, he started asking, "Who? are you Amritlal bhai? Yes yes! I am Manubhai, oh God!" While putting down the receiver these words couldn't come out of his mouth, "It will kill me this time."

He stood up again, handkerchief still in hand. Coming out he started wiping his finger as a person wipes his precious Parker pen after a dip in the ink pot. This did not satisfy him. He started rubbing his finger on the handkerchief. Standing in the v'a'randah he murmured to himself, "Definately she did not bite it. Peanut bits poured out of her mouth like seeds of cheeku. I still remember the scene."

Decending the stairs he came to sit in the car. While eating too, his attention was caught between the morsal and his finger. The whole day passed with these thoughts only.

Night was a problem for him to spend. He felt that the burning in the finger was gradually increasing. He tried to sleep. A thought to tell his wife about the incident came into his mind, but he did not want to trouble her unnecessarily. Everything will be normal by morning. It was his whim only. He won't remember anything in the morning.....

To his surprise he found the bruning in the finger still there, even in the morning. While brushing he kept thinking, "I hope the girl's mouth was not suffering from some infectious or contagious disease? In fact the girl was such a dirty thing."

It flashed across his mind to see the doctor. But then what will he tell him? Then he had an idea of what to say to the doctor. He will just say that the finger was burning; it was for him to see why? Was there any internal complication? Externally there was nothing wrong. But then why this burning sensation? No, no, it was not a mere whim; certainly his finger was burning. Today, more than yesterday. Who knows it will be still he burning tomorrow?

After taking his bath and getting ready he came out of the house to go to the godown. Sitting in the car he said to the driver, "First to the doctor."

He reached the doctor within minutes. The doctor stood up from his seat on seeing Sethji him self coming to his place. He asked, "Oh! Sethji, how come you yourself have....?"

"Nothing special, just like that, let us go inside first" Entering the room, Manubhai



sat on a stool in front of the doctor's chair. Showing him his hand he said, "Just see, what is wrong with this finger? It is burning since yesterday. It had not even been twisted though".

The doctor saw the finger all over, then took the other hand and compared it. After carefully examining it, he said, "Nothing wrong Sethji, rest assured, I will give you just one tablet, it is because of gas etc, everything will be all right".

"Nothing is wrong na".

"Yes! nothing is wrong, you will see it yourself. The doctor grabbed Sethji's other hand and examining it said, "Both are the same na, there is nothing inside the nail or outside it. Leave all worries apart Sethji".

Both of them came outside. The doctor took a writing pad from the table and wrote down the name of some tablet. He came to see off Sethji till the end of the lane. Handling over the prescription to the driver, he said, "Bring these tablets from Chandan Das the chemist". He asked Sethji, by way of instructing him, to take one tablet after the meals.

Leaving Sethji, the doctor turned back. He was smiling inside, so miserable are these rich people, not a boil and a run for the doctor.

Manubhai was less worried about business today. The prices has stopped falling down like traffic signals. Boosting their morale, the head of the All India Groundnut Association said, "No need to worry there is no restriction on genuine peanuts. And one can do away with the ordinary peanuts in the name of special ones".

It assured Manubhai that with in a week everything will be back to normal. All the same, the Association had asked them to stop working for a week or so.

In a way, the big volcanic eruption in his business had subsided but, sitting on a chair, Manubhai started telling himself, "Down with it now here this Mahabharat of the finger has started. This is the limit. What shall I do?"

Manubhai was an educated person. He was a graduate and understood that it was a mere whim, even the doctor had said so. but the question was how was he to get rid of this whim?

The second night passed. On the third night, he had to tell his wife all about it. Her face faded instantly. She was a religious lady. When Sethji told her what the doctor had said, she could not stop herself and said, "How can a doctor cure this? You are suffering because of the curse of that girl, We should consult Soamiji?"

"Rambhajo! these things are not told in public for what will people think about me? But it is strange why at all this finger is burning? Otherwise the finger is quite normal. Only one solution is there now. I shall cut this finger and throw it. But how can one cut a normal finger?" The last words made his heart sink to the bottom and tears filled his eyes.

Watching her husband's suffering the state of mind of the wife was worse. Three months passed like this. Sethji tried many religious remedies and gave charities. At last, he thought of consulting a

psychiatrist he had to tell all about the incident but...

Tired, the couple thought of calling that girl. Manubhai had already guessed whose daughter she could be. He had seen her talking to one of his labourers.

The crime that came into the business was over. Manubhai had suffered no losses. He was happy as if he had crossed the fire of indigo and had reached the paradise. He ordered the manager to distribute sweets among people in the office and the oil mill.

The manager ordered some snacks alongwith sweets. A thought to distribute sweets to the children of labourers came to his mind and he asked the manager to bring more sweets. Children of the labourers should also get sweets.

Groups of children gathered around the godown on hearing about sweets. Manubhai sat on a chair in the verandah. He saw the children. Among sixteen/seventeen children there were six seven girls but that girl was not there. Then he asked that labourer, "Dharma, you have a daughter of around seven". "Yes Sethji I have one" replied Dharma.

It was Dharma only who had called all the children around the huts. Why has he not called his own daughter?

Answered Dharma, "I asked her many a time to come, but she ran towards the river". Then laughingly, he said, "Perhaps you remember that once you socked her, since then she gets scared on hearing your name. The moment she sees you, she runs."

Embarrassed Manubhai said, "After all she is a child."

Calling Dharma nearer, he said, "Listen, bring your daughter to our house some time, Sethani will give something to make her happy. In a way she will wash away the fear inside her."

Dharma and other workers were happy to see the benevolent Sethji. That evening Dharma alongwith his daughter reached Sethji's house. Sethani was embarrassed while talking to them. That shy girl caught hold of the sweets and chunni (georgette cloth worn over head). But as soon as Sethji emerged from the other room, her face went pale white like a paper. She stood there as if dead.

That moment itself, Manubhai understood the girl's state of mind as that of fear. A sort of sensation ran through his mind suppose. The next moment, Sethji turned his face aside. He took a deep breath after coming inside and fell on the sofa. Just then he heard some one running fast. Alongwith it a choking shriek fell on his ears, "oh! my mother- I will die!"

Dharma did not stop to pick up the thing given by the Sethani. He ran after his crying daughter.

Manubhai standing in the door was witnessing all this. He returned inside and fell like a tree on the bed. He was unconscious. Perhaps he was visualising his ghost running after the girl.

The Empowerment of Women

Continued from page 7

Child Care facilities for infants or siblings to be provided in the schools/close proximity to the schools so as to enable "the girls engaged in taking care of siblings to attend school and so a support service for working women belonging to poorer sections" (iv) A strong commitment and political will on the part of the educational agencies, institutions and administrators.

Education, in brief should be treated as an instrument for empowerment for women. Such an empowerment should not only aim at their achievement of equality or enjoyment of rights, but should also prepare (a) men to accept women as equal partners within the family, at work and in the wider society, (b) prepare women to accept the challenge of equality and participate meaningfully and effectively in all sectors of society.

Thus empowerment is a strategy (a) to free women from their present state of subordination, and in many cases, even exploitation, (b) for releasing their creative energies and (c) for enabling them to play the mobilising roles as agents for social transformation.

It should help to restore to

women their rightful place in the society as the producers, as self reliant as well as socially committed.

One cannot end up better than by recalling the words of Gandhiji in this context.

"So long as women in India do not take part with men in the affairs of the world and in religious and political matters, we shall not see India's star rising. Men who suffer from paralysis of one side of the body can do no work. Similarly, if women do not share in men's tasks, the country is bound to remain in this wretched state."



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40 Years of India's Independence

Continued from page 3

that the problems of poverty and weaker sections of society cannot be easily improved in the absence of an all India market and all-India employment opportunities which a united India gives to the people in different parts of the country. All sections of Indian society, while taking pride in their own distinctive identities should also take pride in their being citizens of India. In order that this is done we have to undertake a number of measures.

of communal riots that are taking place in India as also the clashes between weaker sections of Indian society and the better-off sections, and even between the caste Hindus belonging to weaker sections and the weaker sections of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In all these clashes, there is a great deal of feeling that the forces of law and order did not give impartial treatment to the parties engaged in the conflict, but discriminated against the minorities or the

The result is that in spite of 40 years of independence, the country still has a very large number of poor and a very large volume of unemployment and underemployment. It is difficult to make the unemployed and the poor and the hungry to take pride in Indian nationality when they had been fed with the rhetoric that independence will deal with their economic problems and bring them up to better and more secure levels of living.

All sections of Indian society should be made to have a stake in the maintenance of Indian unity and Indian nationality from the point of view of their own enlightened material interest. This means that our programme of economic development should have in-built in it social justice and scope for sharing the dividends by the poor and weaker sections of Indian society. This should be done not by separate programmes divorced from economic growth, but should be integrated into the programme of growth. This means, that we have to take a second look at the anti-poverty programmes which have been undertaken during the last few years not only from the point of view of their being also productive, but also from the point of view of integrating these production increasing programmes with the other production increasing programmes of economic development.

Composite Culture

A part from looking after the economic interests of different regions and of the poor and weaker sections of Indian Society, we must also think of creating a sense of pride in being an Indian. For doing this, emphasis must be placed upon the composite culture and inheritance of the Indian people from the different sections that constitute it. It is not just the Hindu culture, but also the cultural contributions made by other religious groups and by groups all over the country that went to the building up of the Indian inheritance and composite culture. But enlightened self-interest and the composite culture by themselves will not be sufficient to make for national integration. The weaker sections of the Society and the minorities must also get a sense of security.

This is particularly necessary when we see the large number

weaker sections. This is because there is no legislation for the securing of even-handed justice, but the administration is slack and is being accused of being partial to the majority community and the better off sections of Indian society.

Stiffening up of the administrative system and administrative action to make conspicuously evident that the forces of law and order are not getting communalised has got to be the primary task of both the Central and the State Governments as well. The politicians also have got to play a sincere role in this process and not allow themselves to play communal politics in order to get temporary gains of vote banks. Then again, it is necessary that there should be a sense of participation on the part of the masses in the development programmes.

This means that the masses should also feel that the programmes are their own and that they are also expected to play their role in implementing them. This requires decentralisation of planning activity as well as decentralisation of administration, and the introduction of Panchayat Raj institutions such as has recently been attempted in Karnataka. The important thing is that the masses, both rural and urban who constitute the weaker sections of the society should be made to feel that their interests lie in the maintenance of national unity and the utilisation of that unity for the purpose of their own security, their cultural satisfaction and their economic betterment.

Protective Discrimination

Protective discrimination is alright as far as SCs and STs are concerned, but even here there must be a definite time limit after which the discrimination should end automatically, while the extension of protective

discrimination to the other weaker sections on the criterion of caste is an unhealthy development, promotive of disunity and leading to conflicts and confrontations such as which took place in Gujarat some time back. I think, the economic criteria of poverty and educational backwardness should be the basis for protective discrimination.

This would prevent protective discrimination encouraging communal or caste conflicts while the use of economic criteria may make for class conflicts, which could fit in in the democratic system of this country, taking the conflict into voting booths rather than on the streets. In fact, it is a major and basic problem of India's complex society, the use of caste instead of class for the purpose of social justice. While class criteria can be applied to economic development, we also need special measures aimed at the establishment of fraternal relations between different sub-castes in the country and the backward castes and the SCs and STs. Ways and means must be found to foster their coming together in the social sphere and having mutual respect and fraternal social relations.

Sports and music should also be made use of for bringing about a sense of shared identity of the different sub-societies in India, because music and sports transcend difference in caste, creed and language. Similarly children's programmes transcend these barriers and should be used in a more purposive manner for stimulating inter-caste and inter-communal get-togethers. There should also be a new look at our economic policies from the point of view of how far they encourage production of mass consumption goods and reduction in inequalities, or build up inequalities, conspicuous consumption and consumerist style of development which favours the upper classes and leaves out of account the psychological effect of these measures on the mass of the people.

The Language

A new look also needs to be given to the place of language in promoting inter-communication between the various linguistic masses as also inter-communication with their own classes. It may not be possible to replace Hindi by Hindustani at this stage, but attempts can certainly be made for the effective implementation of the three-language formula and making Hindi more acceptable to other languages by the extent to which it draws words from these languages. It is also necessary to remove the impression that Hindi speaking people enjoy special advantages as compared to those whose mother tongue is not Hindi. Promoting knowledge of literature in different Indian languages and the use of an additional common script for selected works in all Indian languages could help to provide a bridge between different Indian languages.

As regards fundamentalism, which is

now raising its ugly head on the Indian scene, the only way to meet it is by promoting adult literacy and the instilling of scientific temper among the masses by appropriate use of the media, especially Television, All India Radio and the language newspapers. Effective steps also need to be taken to secure universalisation of primary education with a core national pattern in its curriculum, embodying the values of the new society envisaged in our Constitution, and promoting the value system that gives mutual respect to different religious and makes for tolerance and fraternity among them.

Finally, Centre-State relations should be put on a more harmonious footing by making the Centre behave much more like a truly federal Government rather than a unitary one, encroaching on the spheres of the State Governments.

We must also see to it that the projected increase of urban population to nearly 350 millions in the year 2000 AD should not repeat the present size composition of the urban population, but go in for more of smaller aggregations of population in urban areas which should have the effect of spreading out modernisation and employment and markets for the whole of the country thereby reducing the urban-rural dichotomy and regional inequalities.

Planned Action

The suggestions I have made are all haphazard and not worked out systematically. They are also not new. The only point I am making is the importance of dealing with the traditional and historical divisive elements in Indian society and replacing them by a spirit of national unity which at the same time recognises the legitimacy of diversity of languages and culture. This requires much more planned action in the social sphere and utilisation of voluntary agencies and intellectuals in the process.

Also needed is a lessening of the distance between rhetoric and reality, or profession and practice, by paying much more effective attention to the rural scene and to the increasing inequalities that development is bringing about, as well as the conspicuous consumption styles it is encouraging.

I have not said anything so far about technological development. This should of course be encouraged but in such a way as to fit in with the employment requirements of Indian society and the need for decentralisation and dispersal of economic activity. I do not have much fears about India not taking advantage of the technological developments abroad or going in by its own efforts for technological improvement. Individually, the Indians have a great deal of mental ability and Indian scientists and technicians stand comparison with those of any other advanced country. I am, therefore, optimistic about the economic future of India and its technological development. What I am afraid of are the obstacles that are placed in the way of economic progress by the kind of divisive forces that are building up in the country, the violent civil disorders that it provokes and the threat it poses to national unity.

I think the biggest need of the hour for seeing Indian society at the turn of the century as a stable one is to deal with the problem of divisive forces that are building up in the country. This is a gigantic task and may not be completed by the time we reach the beginning of the next century, but it has got to be undertaken though it may entail a whole new process of re-education of the Indian people. The task which has to be undertaken is not merely by Government but also by voluntary agencies and individuals of ability and national influence. If we take some effective steps from now to deal with the forces threatening national unity, we will be able to better ensure economic progress of the country and the raising of levels of living of its masses, which by itself will go quite a long way in dealing with the basic underlying cause of unrest which is economic deprivation.

I would like to end, therefore, on a note of subdued optimism for the Indian society at the turn of the century, in the belief that we have wakened up sufficiently, in realising the importance of the social factor in development and the need for re-strengthening the value system in our country which has suffered so much erosion in recent years.

I think we have got to make ourselves nationally aware that it is not possible for us to reach the levels of living and access to luxury consumption goods such as may be possible in the developed industrialised countries with their smaller populations, and their longer record of economic development. That is why it is necessary to talk in terms of a bias for egalitarianism in Indian economic planning which automatically will also bridge the social distance between the different groups in the country.

India and Pakistan

Continued from page 15

Secessionism

As for President Zia's offer on renunciation of support to secessionists in each other's country, there is a good precedent for it. It is Article 3 of the Indo-Pak agreement of December 14, 1948. It reads thus: "Any propaganda for the amalgamation of Pakistan and India or portions thereof including East Bengal on the one hand and West Bengal or Assam or Cooch Bihar or Tripura on the other shall be discouraged. N.B. The word 'propaganda' shall be taken as including any organisation which might be set up for the purpose." Why not adapt this forty-year-old pact to the situation of 1987?

Neither gains much by boosting secessionist personalities—Ganga Singh Dhillon by Pakistan or Wali Khan and G.M. Syed by India. Dhillon has been relatively quiet of late. But Wali Khan and Syed would like us to forget the past. If Ghaffar Khan's brother, Wali's uncle, Dr. Khan Sahab, could become Premier of the entire West Pakistan under the one-unit set up, what prevented Ghaffar and Wali from becoming more effective? This, despite the fact that Jinnah had had Dr. Khan Sahab sacked from the Chief Ministership of the N.W. Frontier Province soon after Pakistan came into being. But Dr. Khan Sahab bore no

rancour. He was an honest man who accepted the realities, the obligations and the loyalties in the new set up.

As for Mr. Syed, he was expelled from the League in 1946. Earlier he was President of the Sind Provincial Muslim

League. He introduced the Pakistan resolution, which had been adopted by the League in 1940 in the Sind Assembly in 1943.

I are We?

He launched a campaign for the boycott of Hindu goods in 1943 and advocated settlement of Muslims from minority provinces in Sind in 1945. He was sore when his entire list of nominees failed to secure the League ticket for the Sind

provincial elections. He launched the Progressive Muslim League in late 1945 and was expelled in 1946. Progressive or reactionary, it was a Muslim League which he set up. In the dirty politics of Sind, Hidayatullah and Khuhro fought their own battles. Syed played for high stakes and lost. They won out and lost later. All three were Leaguers.

What do we gain by boosting such people? How would we like Pakistan lionising similar

characters in our country? Such games must stop. Both Governments are adrift. The Junejo's Government is marking time. It has to decide whether the local bodies' polls due this year should be allowed to be held on a non-party basis. The Rajiv Government on the other hand is pre-occupied licking its wounds when it is not inflicting new ones on itself.

Dare we expect any worthwhile diplomatic initiatives from such regimes?



Heads of States and Governments at the Second SAARC Summit,

Thoughts on Punjab

Continued from page 4

in the IPS, despite the dedicated work of the much despised constable—despite the battalions, the vehicles, and the ever-increasing budgets. We are undoubtedly an under-policed country, bursting with people, who want to improve the quality of their life. If we rely only on police pressure it will take time—and may even end the wrong way.

Punjab is not like Ireland which has defied a political solution for years. Here we should be able to find a solution. After all what does the Haryana election signify? Or for that matter what do all the election in the last few years signify? The message is loud and clear that we are moving towards a true federal structure. These could be the opening lines of a settlement in Punjab.

Can we refuse even to talk about a settlement? We talked to the Nagas and ended a very difficult insurgency. We talked to the Mizos and ended another serious bout of violence, though it was so far away from the Centre that people did not feel the terror of it in Delhi and northern India. Even dacoits we talked to, and we brought them round to surrender. Our resources are so vast, our grievances so real, our philosophy so accommodating,

that we have been able to succeed whenever we have made an attempt. Surely we can talk to the Punjabis who are a brave people, and are with us in everything. We must remember that all demands can be adjusted, and are always scaled down when the time comes for a settlement. An accord may not even be possible on all issue. We must not be afraid of accords because one accord is said to have failed. Would Gandhiji have given up? Would the Buddha have said, "I failed once, so I will not try again—Ahimsa parmo dharma is out."

The causes of the continuation of terrorism in Punjab are complex as it deals with struggles for justice, and the doubts and the dilemmas of violence. On occasions we seemed to be moving towards a settlement and at the last minute it could not be achieved, owing to some unforeseen event, or due to wrong assumptions regarding the impact of a settlement on politics. In the 'Delhi Dialogue' held a few months ago every single Akali group wanted to end the violence. But we never followed it up. Were we worried about political implications? We could have taken the help of Simranjit Singh Mann when he offered it, or Darshan Singh

Ragi or so many others who wanted to intervene. We failed even to follow up the valiant efforts of Sunil Dutt.

The Amnesty International showed its concern for the detainees at Jodhpur in a letter to the Indian Public in The Statesman, New Delhi on 6 July 1987. It reads,

As a member of Group 93, the Norwegian section of Amnesty International, I apply to your readers for help. My organization is working for human rights all over the world. One of our norms is that prisoners should not be subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention and should have the right to an early and fair trial in accordance with international standards. In this context, I am looking for information on the following, who are held in Jodhpur jail in Rajasthan: Gurnek Singh; Gurmej Singh; Gurdial Singh; Harpal Singh; Iqbal Singh; Jagjit Singh; Ajit Singh; Jarnail Singh; Jagraj Singh; and Kartar Singh.

According to Amnesty's information, they were arrested in the Golden Temple at Amritsar in June 1984, together with others who had participated in the fighting there. I believe that these ten people were in the temple simply for religious reasons and did not use any violence. They have now been held for three years, and the National Security Act does not permit imprisonment without trial for periods of more than two years.

I should be very happy to hear that they, or at least some of

them, have been released by this time out, if not, I am extremely anxious to find out the reasons for their being kept

in jail.—Yours, etc., KARI THISTEL S. KAALAND, HVITVEIS-SVINGEN (17B-3770, Krageroe, Norway).

No More Hiroshimas

Continued from page 5

today Japanese are greatly allured towards America. Beside political and diplomatic exchanges, Japan has the biggest cultural, educational and trade exchange with America.

I also realized, during my stay there, that any talk of the defeat of Japan in the second world war moves every Japanese. People virtually weep when they visit war memorials and museums.

I read a few excerpts as quoted in Japanese newspapers from American press about the experiences of some Americans on their Hiroshima visits.

Howard Whiteman, an author and radio-television commentator, wrote an article on his trip to Hiroshima in the New York Times. The title was, Dynamism + Dior Hiroshima + 30. It means that Hiroshima 30 years after the atomic bomb is full of dynamism and fresh like Dior creations. He and his wife visited Hiroshima "with long faces, feelings of guilt, ready to shrivel under accusing eyes". Fortunately, they got in a taxi whose driver could speak English. Hesitantly Whiteman inquired, "How's every thing in Hiroshima."

"Very bad," the driver said, "carp terrible carp, stink. Far as I

concerned, carp finished."

As scientists had predicted for Hiroshima, "For 70 years a wasteland," Whiteman thought that "Still the fish were despoiled—obviously by radiation." His wife nudged his arm and told him not to ask any more.

Mr. Charles Puttakammer relates his experience. He was in a bus with his bare right arm resting on the window. The bus cut close to one side and his forearm scraped against a telephone pole.

"Immediately, three Japanese passengers applied their handkerchiefs to my arm though I assured them I was alright. Some minutes later in downtown Hiroshima a middle-aged woman rushed up. She had been on the bus and thrust a bag into my wife's hand. It contained gauze and adhesive tape that she had just purchased. I regard this spontaneous act of kindness by an unknown woman in Hiroshima as perhaps the finest display of brotherhood I have ever experienced."

In Hiroshima, one finds a slogan written at many places.

No More Hiroshimas

India Pakistan and SAARC

A.G. Noorani

SAARC has just about weathered the storm. After the forcible air-dropping of relief supplies, in violation of Sri Lanka's territorial integrity, it was feared that Sri Lanka might not attend the SAARC Council of Minister's meeting at New Delhi on June 18-9, 1987. The IAF planes had dropped relief supplies only as recently as June 4-live AN 32 transport aircraft escorted by four Mirage 2000 fighters.

It was therefore, statesman-like on the part of Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister, Mr. A.C. Shahul Hameed, to attend. Article X (1) of SAARC's Charter says "decisions at all levels shall be taken on the basis of unanimity". Para (2) adds "Bilateral and contentious issues shall be excluded from the deliberations".

This was a very wise precaution particularly at the initial stages of the organisation. Realising that, Mr. Hameed pleaded.

"Could we not evolve a new mechanism where at every meeting at Foreign Ministers' level we have informal closed-door meetings where we could air our views candidly? SAARC must not end up as a deaf, dumb and blind association".

Substitute the word "convention" for the word "mechanism" and you arrive at a very sensible proposal, indeed. Informal talks on SAARC occasions have always taken place. But they are on a bilateral level discussing bilateral issues. When all the representatives meet together, they discuss matters of common concern. What Mr. Hameed has suggested is that a bilateral issue be discussed by all together if it be one likely to affect SAARC as a whole.

Ganging Up

Needless to add, the proposal did not register well with India which fears that the smaller nations will use it to "gang up" against India. It must be mentioned that even Pakistan was a belated convert to SAARC. Its initial response to the Bangladesh President the late Gen. Zia-ur-Rehman's proposal for regional co-operation in South Asia was one of scepticism. But on the eve of the June meeting of SAARC Foreign Ministers, the President of Pakistan Gen. Zia-ul-Haq wrote to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi suggesting that SAARC be used as a forum to sort out bilateral issues between India and Sri Lanka. Mr. Gandhi rebuffed the suggestion. But, make no mistake about it, a beginning has been made. Next time a major bilateral issue arises, a similar suggestion will be made. It will continue to be made so long as SAARC exists. The moral is not that SAARC's Charter should be revised but that bilateral disagreement be tackled speedily and effectively before they begin to affect the regional organisation. How long can we reject the proposal for informal discussions of bilateral issues?

As it is, such discussions do take place though between the two affected parties. But if the bilateral problem gets out of hand, SAARC is affected for the worse. It will take a while to evolve the "convention" referred to earlier—Mr. Hameed's "mechanism" informally worked.

SAARC meetings have served as convenient occasions at which to remove snags in the Indo-Pak dialogue—things like

meetings of the ministers' level Joint Commission and its sub-commissions. More we cannot expect. For one thing a badly mauled Rajiv Gandhi has no desire or incentive to do anything which is not populist. Indo-Pak reconciliation calls for compromise. And compromises have their critics.

Another Scenario

But imagine another scenario. Supposing we were to compromise on the two remaining issues and conclude an Indo-Pak Treaty embodying a no-war declaration plus renunciation of support to secessionist movements on each other's territory. Imagine the impact

this will have on the relations between the two countries, on the atmosphere within their territories, and on the region as a whole.

The two issues holding up the Treaty are explicit renunciation of bases and alliances and an equally explicit renunciation of recourse to international organisations for the solution of bilateral issues. On the first, the formula used in Article 8 of the Indo-Bangladesh Treaty is very opposite. It is a pledge not to "enter into or participate in any military alliance directed against the other party" and, more significantly, not to "allow the use of its territory for committing any act that may cause military damage to or constitute a threat to the

security" of the other party.

As for bilateralism, the Simla formula—settlement of disputes bilaterally—is all one can ask for. To insist that the bilateral approach should be adopted "exclusively" is to ask that two parties can contract themselves out of the U.N. Charter. This is legalism in excess.

In the wake of the Simla accord in 1972 while Mrs. Indira Gandhi said that she was not afraid of Pakistan going to the U.N., Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto asked his countrymen what had they achieved by going to the U.N. Bilateralism is ensured by sound diplomacy, not legal formulae designed to build a cordon sanitaire around the region.

Continued on page 15



Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India, Zia-ul-Haq and Gandhi; Both governments are addressing the SAARC Council of Ministers' meeting at New Delhi.

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